CLERMONT.

A TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, &c. &c.

Our Paſſions gone, and Reaſon on her throne,
Amaz'd we ſee the miſchiefs we have done:
After a tempeſt, when the winds are laid,
The calm ſea wonders at the wrecks it made.

WALLER.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Preſs,
FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.
1798.

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THOMAS MARIA ROCHE.

AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN OF THE LAKES, ETC. ETC.

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1802.

CLERMONT.

CHAP. I.

Thoughts ſucceed thoughts, like reſtleſs troubled waves,
Daſhing out one another.

AFTER peruſing her letter, Madame D' Alembert leant her head upon her hand and continued ſilent many minutes as if abſorbed in profound meditation; then raiſing it, "my love (ſhe cried to Madeline, whoſe eyes, though ſhe had retired to a window were faſtened on her), my love, (motioning for her to take a ſeat by her), I am now going to put your friendſhip to the teſt."

"I truſt, Madame, (ſaid Madeline as ſhe ſeated herſelf), you do not doubt its being able to bear any trial you can put it to."

"I have no reaſon indeed, (replied Madame, taking her hand) to doubt your affection or ſincerity; but the requeſt I am about making appears to me unreaſonable, conſequently I fear its appearing much more ſo to you." She pauſed a minute, and then, tho' with rather a heſitating voice, proceeded.

"Monſieur D'Alembert is coming to the chateau; the letter I have juſt received came by an expreſs to announce his approach,—in the courſe of this day I expect him. Reaſons of the moſt powerful nature, but reaſons which I cannot, muſt not, dare not declare, make me wiſh to prevent his ſeeing you, at leaſt while you are under my protection."

"Deareſt Madam (then ſaid Madeline with quickneſs), let me return immediately to my father; how could you imagine I ſhould think your requeſting me to do ſo unreaſonable; I have long wiſhed to ſee him, and my regret at quitting you will now be leſſened by knowing

knowing Monſieur D'Alembert will be your companion."

"My dear girl (cried Madame) you totally miſtake me; though I do not wiſh you to ſee Monſieur D'Alembert, I by no means wiſh you to return to your father; on the contrary, ſhould you inſiſt on doing ſo, you will pain me beyond expreſſion."

"But how, Madame, (aſked Madeline with much ſurpriſe) how will it be poſſible to avoid being ſeen by Monſieur if I do not quit the chateau."

"By conſenting to ſeclude yourſelf from ſociety (anſwered Madame) while he is in it; his ſtay he informs me will be but ſhort—was it a long one I could not be ſo ſelfiſh as to attempt to keep you; tell me then, my Madeline—terminate my ſuſpence—will you gratify, will you comply with my wiſhes?" She pauſed and looked earneſtly at Madeline for a reply, but it was many minutes ere Madeline could give one.

Amazed by what ſhe had heard, and learning that Madame D'Alembert had pow-

erful reaſons for concealing her from her huſband, her whole ſoul was engroſſed in trying to develope thoſe reaſons; but like the other myſteries which had tortured it, ſhe vainly tried to do ſo.

"Ah! Madeline (ſaid Madame D'Alembert, in a melancholy voice) I fear this ſilence bodes me no good."

"My deareſt Madam, (cried Madeline) I would at once have anſwered you, could I at once have determined how to act; but I will acknowledge though my affection for you prompts me to comply with your requeſt, my pride makes me revolt from the idea of becoming the unknown gueſt of any perſon; beſides—beſides (with ſome little heſitation) there is a kind of apprehenſion mingled with that pride. I recollect the particular, the impreſſive manner, in which my beloved benefactreſs bade me remember, that whenever Monſiuer D'Alembert came to the chateau, ſhe did not deſire me to continue in it; and her words, together with thoſe you have uttered, make me fear that Monſieur has ſome ſecret enmity againſt me, though for what

what cauſe I cannot poſſibly conceive, unacquainted as I am with him."

"What a wild idea, (exclaimed Madame), to ſuppoſe a perſon who is really ignorant of your exiſtence, can have any enmity to you?"

"Good heaven! Madam, (cried Madeline) how you aſtoniſh me!"

"I repeat, (ſaid her friend) that Monſieur D'Alembert, at this moment, knows not that ſuch a being as Madeline Clermont exiſts: when he comes to the chateau he certainly muſt hear about you, but your real reſidence I ſhall take care to have concealed from him: Come, tell me, do you longer heſitate how to act?"

Madeline ſighed deeply; ſhe was unwil- to ſtay, and yet unwilling to go: unwilling from motives of affection, and a fear that if ſhe did ſhe ſhould be deemed ungrateful; rightly conſidering that thoſe who will not ſometimes tax their feelings for a friend, are

themſelves unworthy of the appellation of one.

"No, Madam, (ſaid ſhe, after the ſilence of a few minutes) I no longer heſitate,—do with me as you pleaſe; I ſhould ill requite your favors if I diſobeyed your wiſhes."

"A thouſand thanks, my Madeline, for your compliance; (cried her friend, tenderly embracing her) it has removed a heavy burthen of uneaſineſs from me: and now, my dear girl, to inform you of the plan which I have concerted for your concealment; a plan which only to thoſe immediately concerned in carrying it into execution I ſhall impart, in order to avoid any danger of a diſcovery, and to prevent idle curioſity: I ſhall immediately have it circulated through the family that you are going to pay a viſit to a relation ſome leagues off, and order Lubin, (in whom, his old godmother, Agatha, and Floretta, I alone mean to confide) to prepare horſes for the journey; as ſoon as you are out of ſight of the chateau,

he

he ſhall conduct you to the grotto by the lake, where as ſoon as it is dark, Floretta ſhall be ſent to re-conduct you home, and by a private door bring you to the chamber of my mother, which I think better adapted than your own for concealing you, as her death is too recent to permit the ſervants to wiſh to enter it.

"I hope my love (ſeeing Madeline turn pale) you have no objection to it?"

Madeline was aſhamed to acknowledge ſhe had.—

"No, Madam, (anſwered ſhe faulteringly) I have not."

"Conſider, my dear, (ſaid her friend, who was not perfectly ſatisfied by this aſſurance) your ſeclusion in it will be but ſhort; and while you continue in it, Agatha and Floretta ſhall paſs as much time as poſſible with you; every opportunity too which occurs for viſiting you, without danger of detection, I ſhall ſeize: retire now, my love to your chamber, and in order to give the appear-

ance we wiſh to my plan, put on a riding habit."

Madeline withdrew, but inſtead of changing her dreſs, ſhe ſat down to reconſider all that had paſſed, and the more ſhe reflected on it, the more her heart recoiled from the idea of continuing in the chateau.

"If diſcovered (ſaid ſhe) I may be ininſulted as an intruder, and degraded not only in my own eyes, but thoſe of the family; but can I retract the promiſe I have given to Madame D'Alembert? No, it is impoſſible to do ſo—I cannot appear fickle, I cannot diſappoint her; ſooner than do ſo I will run the riſk even of indignity."

While thus engroſſed in thought, Madame D'Alembert, followed by Agatha and Floretta, entered: Madeline ſtarted and attempted to apologize for not having put on the habit.

"You

"You are an idle girl, (cried her friend) the horſes are waiting, and no time is to be loſt."

In a few minutes ſhe was ready, and with Madame D'Alembert deſcended to the hall, where ſhe found many of the old ſervants, (who loved her for the ſake of their dear departed lady as well as for her own) aſſembled to bid her farewell; having received and returned that farewell, and alſo a parting embrace from her friend, ſhe mounted her horſe and ſet off at a ſmart pace with Lubin: they ſoon penetrated into the thickeſt of the wood, and after proceeding about a mile through it, they turned into a winding path leading to the lake; here they both alighted, and Madeline, being acquainted with the way, walked on, while Lubin ſlowly led the horſes after her. This was the very path which de Sevignie had taken the laſt evening ſhe beheld him, and the moment ſhe entered it, the remembrance of that evening ruſhed upon her mind; ſhe ſighed heavily: "Ah! how dif-

ferent (ſhe cried to herſelf) were my feelings then to what they are now!—then I imagined myſelf the beloved of de Sevignie's heart, then believed him entitled, not only from affection but worth, to the poſſeſſion of mine; but now no idea of that kind remains, and to that which I once entertained I look back as to a delightful dream, from which I have only been awakened to miſery and horror.

"Yet can de Sevignie (ſhe continued, as ſhe purſued her way), can de Sevignie, (as if only now ſhe had conceived the doubt) be perfidious, be unworthy? Oh! impoſſible! (cried ſhe, yielding to the ſuggeſtions of a tenderneſs, which, though oppoſed, had never been in the leaſt degree conquered), Oh! impoſſible! Vice could never wear ſuch a ſemblance of virtue as he wore; the alteration in his manner muſt have been owing to ſome circumſtances which pride prevented his revealing, and I ſhould, I ought at once to have believed ſo: ſurely I had done ſo, had

had I not obeyed, (let me whiſper it to myſelf) the dictates of diſappointed tenderneſs and offended pride."

On reaching the grotto ſhe ſeated herſelf on the moſs-covered ſtone before it; the very ſeat on which ſhe had once been alarmed by de Sevignie; the very ſeat on which ſhe had once, while the pale ſtars glimmered o'er her head, ſo impatiently waited his approach.

"Oh! what minutes were thoſe, (ſhe exclaimed) Oh! what the palpitation of that moment which brought him to my feet!—" Again ſhe beheld him in idea, again ſaw his fine eyes beaming on her with mingled love, hope and ſorrow; again felt the ſoft preſſure of his cold trembling hand; again heard the ſighs, with which he declared there was an unconquerable neceſſity for their ſeparation.

"Oh! de Sevignie (ſhe cried) to know you happier now than when that declaration was made, would relieve my heart of an al-

moſt intolerable weight of anguiſh: ſhe wiſhed ſhe could learn whether he had yet left V—; but to enquire without betraying her motives for doing ſo was impoſſible, and from the idea of diſcovering them ſhe ſhrunk with affright.

"What ſatisfaction (ſhe aſked herſelf) could I derive by knowing he was ſtill there? No hope of ſeeing him could be derived by ſuch a knowledge."

She continued engroſſed by this idea till ſhe felt the tears dropping upon her cheeks; theſe brought her to a ſenſe of her weakneſs. "Is it by indulging ſuch feelings as my preſent ones,—is it by dwelling on the remembrance of Sevignie, (ſaid ſhe) that I adhere to the reſolution I formed not to think about him, that I obey the injunctions of my lamented benefactreſs, or what I know muſt be the wiſhes of my father: what folly! inſtead of trying to drive him from my heart, to try and eſtabliſh him more firmly than ever

ever within it, by ſtill believing him amiable! Ah, had he been really ſo, never would he have formed plans which he did not mean to realize; never would he have condemned my opening my heart to ſuch a friend as I was bleſt with; and 'tis only a ſudden impulſe of weak and culpable tenderneſs which could make me again conſider him in the light I once did, an impulſe which I will endeavour never more to yield to: Yes, de Sevignie, more reſolutely than ever I will try to expell you from my heart. She wiped away her tears, but felt at the moment how arduous was the taſk which ſhe had impoſed upon herſelf.—

How difficult it would be, in moments of ſecurity and quiet, to baniſh de Sevignie from her thoughts, when ſcenes of grief and terror, ſuch as ſhe had lately experienced, had not had power to do ſo.

"Heaven, however, (cried ſhe) ſtrengthens thoſe who wiſh to do right; I wiſh to do ſo,

ſo, and to do ſo I think I muſt forget de Sevignie."

Lubin, who had hitherto been engaged in ſecuring the horſes within a cavity of the mountain, now approached, and opening a ſmall baſket of nice proviſions, which Agatha had given him, he ſpread a napkin on the graſs before Madeline, and laid the contents of the baſket on it.

"'Tis time for you to take ſomething Mademoiſelle (ſaid he) I dare ſay 'tis now far beyond your uſual dinner hour; do pray, Mademoiſelle, do take ſomething, you look faint indeed."

Madeline felt weak and tired, and did not reſiſt his entreaty: after her little repaſt was over, he removed the things to a reſpectful diſtance, and ſat down to refreſh himſelf. The parents of Lubin had paſſed the principal part of their lives in the ſervice of the Counteſs and her family, and at their death, which

which happened when he was very young, ſhe had taken him entirely under her protection; his gratitude and fidelity amply repaid her kindneſs, and ſhe had conſidered him as ſhe did Agatha, infinitely above the reſt of the ſervants.

With true French gaiety after he had finiſhed his repaſt, he amuſed himſelf with ſinging the following

SONG.

COME, ſweet Content, thou ever ſmiling maid,
Come, ſit with me beneath this old trees' ſhade;
Or ramble with me round yon green-clad hill,
Adown whoſe ſide ſoft ſteals the ſilvery rill.

If thou'rt an inmate of my humble home,
I would not change it for a gilded dome;
If bleſt with thee, my table ſhall be crown'd
With ſweets, in riot's banquet never found;

Careleſs with thee I'd roam at early day,
And join the warblers on the waving ſpray;
Or gaily tend my fleecy bleating fold,
And kindly guard them from the wint'ry cold.

Oh! let me fold thee to this throbbing heart,
Which ſighs for peace thou only can'ſt impart;
And let me with thee ever humbly bend,
Before each trial heav'n may pleaſe to ſend.

Like ſome kind ſtar that gives a cheering ray,
To lead benighted mortals on their way,
Do thou appear to check each anxious thought,
And give that bleſſedneſs ſo long I've ſought.

"Is that your own compoſition, Lubin, (aſked Madeline) whoſe mind was amuſed by liſtening to him.

"Yes, Mademoiſelle, (replied he) I paſs many of the long winter nights in ſcribbling; and then I ſet my own words to my own muſic, and they anſwer my purpoſe as well as the beſt ſong in the world."

"The purpoſe of amuſing you, (ſaid Maline."

"Yes, Mademoiſelle, and keeping care from my mind: life is ſo ſhort that one ſhould, according to the old ſaying, 'learn to live all the days of their life,' which they never can do if they yield to fretting or vexation."

"True

"True, (cried Madeline), thoſe who think as you do, Lubin, are only truly happy."

Lubin now rambled away, and Madeline alſo aroſe and walked about.

The day was now far advanced,

"And in the weſtern ſky the downward ſun
"Look'd out effulgent from amid the flaſh
"Of broken clouds, gay ſhifting to his beams."

Thoſe beautiful clouds, and all his dazzling ſplendour were reflected in the clear boſom of the lake, along with its verdant banks; where the laureſtine juſt beginning to bloſſom, and the arbutis already in bloom, reared high their beauteous heads, while its ſoft murmurs intermingled in the wild concert of woodland choriſters: a thouſand golden beams played upon the foreſt, heightening the richneſs of its autumnal ſhades. and as they illumined the diſtant mountains, diſcovering ſome of their moſt romanſtic receſſes. The mind of Madeline was ſoothed by the charming ſcene, and ſhe felt that while ſhe retained her preſent taſte for the works of nature, ſhe could not be entirely inſenſible

to

to pleaſure. The wild flowers that grew about now emitted their choiceſt fragrance, and the evening gale bore to her ear the bleating of diſtant flocks, and the far off whiſtle of the peaſant the welcome ſignal to his companions in induſtry, to retire from their labours.

At the appointed time Floretta came to her; in about an hour Lubin ſaid he would follow them to the chateau.

"Well to be ſure, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid Floretta, as they walked towards it) 'tis with fear and trembling I came for you to night; Lord I hope this may be the laſt time I ſhall ever be ſent to the grotto."

"Is Monſieur D'Alembert come? (aſked Madeline."

"Come, yes, and in a way that was not expected; he has brought three coaches full of company along with him."

"Brought company along with him? (repeated Madeline, in a voice of aſtoniſhment.

"Yes,

"Yes, an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, and all gay ſouls I can aſſure you."

"Your lady's feelings muſt be extremely hurt, (ſaid Madeline."

"Aye to be ſure; but if Monſieur never hurts them more ſeverely, ſhe will be very well off."

"This bringing ſo much company to the chateau ſeems as if he intended to make a long ſtay at it."

"Oh, no, Mademoiſelle, (replied Floretta with quickneſs) I took care to inquire particularly from Lewis his valet de chambre, about his intentions, and he told me his maſter and his friends were taking a tour of pleaſure, and the chateau lying in their way, had merely called at it for the purpoſe of reſting themſelves a few days."

"Or perhaps to requeſt Madame D'Alembert's company," (ſaid Madeline.)

"Not they indeed, (cried Floretta) ſhe is quite too grave for my maſter, or the friends he likes, and tis a pity indeed that ſhe ſhould be ſo: Lord, what is the uſe of fine cloaths,

or youth, or beauty, or fortune, if one lives moping and retired, as ſhe does, for all the world like a hermit."

"Conſider, Floretta, (ſaid Madeline) the affliction your lady is at preſent in."

"And what does ſolitude do but increaſe that affliction; when a thing is over what is the good of lamenting it? Ah! Ma'amſelle, I have often thought what a fine figure I'd make if I had my lady's fine cloaths, and jewels, and carriage to roll about in."

"I aſſure you, Mademoiſelle, (continued ſhe with a conceited ſimper) I could ſcarcely come to you to-night; Monſieur Lewis, whom I knew very well, when in Paris with my lady, would hardly let me leave him; he is one of the politeſt creatures in the world, and pays ſuch pretty compliments; he ſays I am vaſtly improved by the country air, and that my natural roſes would ſhame all the artificial ones in Paris. He and the other ſervants which accompanied him, have quite enlivened us again, all but poor Agatha; ſhe has moped about ever ſince they came,

but

but ſhe is old, Mademoiſelle, (proceeded Floretta, with a ſignificant look) ſhe is old, and that is the reaſon ſhe cannot be animated like us."

"Poor Agatha! (exclaimed Madeline) who felt more attached than ever to the faithful creature, from finding ſhe had feelings ſo congenial to her own."

She had now reached the chateau, and her heart palpitated with a fear of being diſcovered either by Monſieur D'Alembert, or ſome of his ſervants; but of this Floretta aſſured her there was no danger.

Through a private door in the rea of the caſtle, ſhe led her up a flight of narrow ſtairs, ſeldom uſed, to the gallery, which was now gaily illumined by the lights that blazed in the hall: fearful of being diſcovered, Madeline haſtened to the chamber, in which Floretta informed her ſhe would find Agatha waiting to receive her; but ere ſhe reached it, a ſhout of noiſy laughter, aſcended from

an

an apartment contigious to the hall, and ſhocked her, by making her feel as if an inſult had been offered to the memory of the counteſs.

"If my feelings are ſo poignant upon the occaſion, (ſaid ſhe to herſelf), ah, what muſt the feelings of her daughter be!—Surely, ſurely M. D'Alembert cannot have that ſenſibility which the huſband of Viola ſhould poſſeſs, or he would not thus have broken in upon the ſacredneſs of her grief."

Floretta knocked ſoftly at the chamber door and it was immediately opened by Aggatha; but the moment Madeline entered it ſhe ſtarted back, ſhocked and ſurpriſed at beholding it in the ſame ſtate as when the remains of the counteſs were taken from it. Agatha took her hand, and, drawing her in, locked the door. "Pray be compoſed, dear Mademoiſelle, (ſaid ſhe) my lady, who feared the ſight of the hangings might affect you, would have had them removed had it been poſſible for me and Floretta to have taken them down; but as that was not the caſe, ſhe feared

feared deſiring the men to do ſo, leſt it ſhould excite ſuſpicion."

"I own (cried Madeline, in a faint voice, with a face as pale as death) I own I would rather have continued in my own room; but if you or Floretta will have the goodneſs to paſs the night in this with me, I ſhall not feel quite ſo reluctant to it."

"As to my ſtaying with you, Mademoiſelle, (exclaimed Floretta, inſtantly going to the door) that is utterly impoſſible; I have a thouſand things to do, which Agatha, if ſhe pleaſes can tell you of."

So ſaying ſhe haſtily unlocked the door, and departed without ceremony.

"For my part, (ſaid Agatha) as ſoon as ſhe had again ſecured it) I would ſtay with you with all my heart, but that I fear if I did I ſhould be miſſed (as ſome of the maids rooms open into mine) and if I was, your being in the caſtle muſt be diſcovered, which I know would diſtreſs my lady exceedingly."

"And

"And why ſhould it diſtreſs her?" demanded Madeline with quickneſs, no longer able to ſuppreſs her curioſity.

"Why, (repeated Agatha, looking earneſtly at her) becauſe—dear Mademoiſelle, (cried ſhe as if ſuddenly recollecting herſelf) I am ſure I can't tell you."

"Don't be alarmed, Agatha, (ſaid Madeline, with affected compoſure), I ſhall not inquire into ſecrets, which I ſee your reſpect for your lady makes you ſolicitous to conceal; in ſilence I ſhall ſubmit to her wiſhes, her kindneſs gives her a right to expect this from me."

Supper was prepared for Madeline, as was alſo proviſions for the enſuing day, as till the next night, ſhe was informed ſhe could not be viſited by any one. Agatha preſſed her to ſit down to table; ſhe had no inclination to eat, ſhe however complied with her entreaty, and made her alſo take a chair, being anxious to detain her as long as poſſible.

"Monſieur

"Monſieur D'Alembert makes no long ſtay at the chateau, I underſtand, (ſaid ſhe), from Floretta."

"No, thank heaven, he ſoon quits it," replied Agatha.

"It ſeems he merely ſtopped to reſt himſelf, and his party at it," reſumed Madeline.

"So he and his good for nothing ſervants ſay, (cried Agatha) but I have reaſon to think he had ſome other motive for coming to it."

"Have you?" ſaid Madeline eagerly.

"Yes; I imagine he came to it for the purpoſe of ſeeing what part of the eſtate would be the beſt to diſpoſe of."

"Diſpoſe of? (repeated Madeline, in amazement) ſurely Monſieur D'Alembert could not think of diſpoſing of any part of it? ſurely his ſituation does not require his doing ſo?"

"'Tis a ſign you know little of it, or you would not ſay ſo, (cried Agatha) his extravagance has long rendered him in want of money."

"His extravagance! (again repeated Madeline) Monſieur D'Alembert extravagant! Gracious heaven how you aſtoniſh me! By what means was the counteſs de Merville prevailed on to let her daughter marry a man of diſſipation?"

"He appeared both to the Counteſs and her daughter a very different man before, to what he did after his marriage," anſwered Agatha.

"And to the too late diſcovery of his real character the melancholy of the Counteſs was to be imputed," ſaid Madeline.

Agatha looked at her but made no reply.

A dreadful idea ſtarted in the mind of Madeline:—the words of Floretta, the ſolemn manner in which ſhe had been bound by the counteſs to conceal the black tranſaction in the chapel, ſeemed to declare it was a juſt one: ſhe graſped the arm of Agatha, ſhe faſtened her eyes upon her as if they would

would pierce into the very receſſes of her ſoul.

"The horrible myſtery then (ſaid ſhe) is explained; — Monſieur D'Alembert — the chapel —"

"Ha! (cried Agatha, ſtarting from her chair and ſhaking off the hand of Madeline) what do you ſay? Beware, beware, Mademoiſelle of what you utter; beware (with a dark frown) even of what you think. I know what you would have ſaid, I know what you have imagined, but —"

"But I am not miſtaken," ſaid Madeline, in a hollow voice, and ſinking againſt the back of the chair.

"You are; (exclaimed Agatha) you have done injuſtice to Monſieur D'Alembert."

"Heaven be praiſed, (cried Madeline, claſping her hands together) heaven be praiſed; had I continued much longer to believe the idea I formed of him a juſt one, I think I could not have preſerved my reaſon."

"Dear heart, I am ſure I ſhould not have wondered if you had loſt it directly, (ſaid Agatha) it muſt have been horrible indeed to ſuppoſe that the huſband of the daughter could have murdered the mother."

"Oh, horrible, moſt horrible!" exclaimed Madeline.

"Though Monſieur D'Alembert is gay and extravagant, and not the kind of man he appeared to be before his marriage, he is not ſuch a villain as you ſuppoſed him," cried Agatha.

"I was not then miſtaken in ſuppoſing that Madame D'Alembert had another cauſe for grief beſides the death of her mother?" ſaid Madeline.

"No, you were not miſtaken as to that, (replied Agatha) poor thing ſhe frets a great deal about Monſieur, and I am ſure if he ſells any part of the domain belonging to the chateau, it will go nigh to break her heart, for ſhe loves every inch of it; and if any thing could raiſe my poor dear lady out of her grave, I am certain his doing ſo would."

"I

"I hope he will not be ſo diſreſpectful to her memory, (ſaid Madeline) as to do what he knows would have been contrary to her inclination, nor ſo inhuman to her daughter as to diſregard her wiſhes."

"I fear he will, Mademoiſelle: (cried Agatha) when once he takes a thing into his head, 'tis a difficult matter to make him give it up: but I hope when you ſee Madame you will not tell her any thing I have been ſaying."

"You may be aſſured I ſhall not," ſaid Madeline.

"She means (reſumed Agatha) to pay you a viſit to-morrow night, if ſhe can poſſibly ſteal from her company: poor ſoul tis very different company to what ſhe has been accuſtomed to: Ah! Mademoiſelle, if my dear lady had been living, ſuch people would never have been permitted to enter the chateau. Alas! its glory and happineſs are departed, and I ſhall never again behold ſuch days as once I ſaw within it."

" Farewell Mademoiſelle, (continued ſhe, riſing) tis time for me to leave you, for I hear the ſervants retiring to reſt, heaven bleſs you and protect you."

Madeline locked the door after her with a trembling hand, and involuntarily ſhuddered as ſhe turned from it at finding herſelf alone in a chamber ſo gloomy, and ſo remote from every one as her preſent one was. Her ſpirits were too much agitated, in conſequence of her converſation with Agatha, to permit her to ſleep; and, even if inclined to do ſo, ſhe could not think of repoſing on a bed where ſhe had ſo lately ſeen the corpſe of her friend; whenever ſhe glanced at it, it was with a kind of terror, as if ſhe almoſt expected to have beheld again upon it the ſame ghaſtly figure.

Within the chamber was a cloſet which contained a ſmall ſelection of books; determined on ſitting up the night, Madeline took one from it, with a hope that it would divert her thoughts and prevent her attention from dwelling on what diſtreſt her; but this hope

hope was a vain one, and the night wore heavily away. About the dawn of day ſhe leant back in the arm chair on which ſhe was ſitting, and ſlept for a little time; the enſuing hours were as tedious and melancholy as thoſe ſhe had recently paſſed; ſhe waited moſt impatiently for the promiſed viſit from ſome of her friends, particularly after it grew too dark for her to read. At length in about two hours after ſhe had been compelled to lay aſide her book, ſhe heard a ſoft tap at the chamber door, ſhe immediately opened it, and Floretta entered with a light, and a ſmall baſket of proviſions. Madeline followed her to the table on which ſhe laid them, as ſoon as ſhe had re-locked the door, and then to her infinite amazement and terror firſt perceived that Floretta was weeping violently.

CHAP. V.

" Ah, fear, ah, frantic fear,
" I ſee, I ſee thee near:
" I know thy hurried ſtep, thy haggard eye,
" Like thee I ſtart, like thee diſorder'd fly."

"WHAT is the matter, Floretta?" aſked Madeline, in a voice of alarm.

" Ah! Mademoiſelle, (exclaimed Floretta, dropping into a chair, and wringing her hands) poor Agatha!"

" What of her? (cried Madeline, with an eagerneſs that ſhook her frame."

" She

"She is dead!" replied Floretta.

"Dead! (repeated Madeline, receding a few paces and wildly ſtaring) dead!" ſhe exclaimed, with mingled doubt and horror.

"Yes, (ſaid Floretta) and her death is attended with ſuch appearances!"

Madeline trembled univerſally, her reſpiration grew faint, ſhe ſat down by Floretta, ſhe laid her cold hand upon her, but it was many minutes ere ſhe could ſpeak.

"Her death has been attended with ſuſpicioûs circumſtances then?" ſaid ſhe.

"It has," replied Floretta.

Madeline ſtarted up, and wildly demanded whether ſhe could not ſee Madame D' Alembert directly.

Without giving herſelf time to reflect how very improbable it was that they could have gained acceſs to the caſtle to perpetrate the crime ſhe accuſed them of, the moment Ma-

deline heard of Agatha's death being attended with ſuſpicious circumſtances, ſhe conceived the dreadful idea of her having fallen a victim to the murderers of the counteſs, in order to prevent their being diſcovered; and to a ſimilar apprehenſion ſhe could not doubt ſhe would be ſacrificed herſelf, as they had ſeen her in the chapel with Agatha.

It was this fear therefore that made her wiſh to ſee Madame D'Alembert directly that ſhe might entreat her permiſſion to return to her father without any farther delay.

"See my lady, Mademoiſelle," ſaid Floretta, alſo riſing.

"Yes, (cried Madeline, almoſt gaſping for breath), this houſe is no longer ſafe for me to dwell in, and ſhe muſt let me quit it directly."

"I will go and try whether ſhe can come to you Mademoiſelle, (ſaid Floretta, who, alarmed by her agitation, feared to oppoſe her), but indeed I fear ſhe cannot, without Monſieur's

Monſieurs knowledge, as ſhe is now engaged with him and his company: I know ſhe intends to viſit you to-night, as ſhe and my maſter are to have ſeparate chambers, though it will be at a late hour; if you could wait till then it would be better."

"Well, (cried Madeline, growing a little compoſed and re-ſeating herſelf) if you are ſure ſhe intends to come, I will, however contrary to my inclination, wait her own time, rather than expoſe her to the diſpleaſure of Monſieur D'Alembert: and yet, Floretta, (continued ſhe looking earneſtly at her) I cannot conceive why he ſhould be diſpleaſed to hear I was in the chateau."

"Diſpleaſed! (repeated Floretta), Lord I am ſure he would be rejoiced!"

"Rejoiced!" exclaimed Madeline.

"Yes, I have not a doubt but what he would," ſaid Floretta.

"Then why (aſked Madeline) am I concealed?"

"Becauſe," cried Floretta —"

"What?" eagerly demanded Madeline.

"Why to tell you the truth, Mademoiſelle (cried Floretta) but remember it muſt go no farther, I believe my lady thinks you are too pretty to be ſeen by Monſieur."

"Heavens! (exclaimed Madeline) what would you have me imagine that your lady could harbour a ſuſpicion of me?"

"Lord, no, to be ſure I would not, (ſaid Floretta) tis the very laſt thing in the world I would have you imagine, becauſe it would be the moſt unjuſt idea you could form; 'tis not of you, but Monſieur, ſhe harbours a ſuſpicion; ſhe knows if he ſaw you —"

"Would to God I had not conſented to ſtay in the houſe," interrupted Madeline.

The motive for Madame D'Alembert's concealing her was now explained; the motive which prompted her lamented benefactreſs ſo repeatedly to tell her not to continue in the chateau, if Monſieur D'Alembert came to it.

"Oh!

"Oh! my father, (ſhe ſighed to herſelf) would to heaven I was again within your arms."

"I hope Mademoiſelle, (ſaid Floretta) you will not leave us; Monſieur departs in a few days, and I hope you will not mind a ſhort confinement."

Madeline made no reply, but deſired to hear the particulars of Agatha's death.

"About the middle of the night, (ſaid Floretta) I and a fellow ſervant who ſleeps with me were awoke by dreadful groans from the chamber of Agatha, which opened into ours; we directly jumped out of bed, and running into it, aſked what was the matter; but groans were all we could hear: we grew dreadfully frightened, and called up more of the ſervants. A light was then procured, and we diſcovered Agatha in fits: the noiſe we made alarmed my maſter and miſtreſs, o'er whoſe apartment we were, and throwing their wrappers over them they came up to

inquire what was the matter. My lady appeared greatly ſhocked by the ſituation of Agatha, and directly ordered a phyſician to be ſent for, but Monſieur countermanded this order; he ſaid he had a medical friend in the houſe, who could do as much for her as any other perſon in the ſame line. He was accordingly ſent for, and on examining Agatha, he declared her fits were owing to her having eaten ſomething that diſagreed with her. Scarcely had he ſpoken when ſhe came to herſelf, and opening her eyes, in a hollow voice exclaimed, 'Poiſon! I am poiſoned!'

'Good heavens! (cried Madame D'Alembert ſtarting) what does ſhe ſay? does ſhe not ſay ſhe is poiſoned?'

'You are not to mind what ſhe ſays, (replied Monſieur, in rather an angry voice) the woman raves, and I inſiſt on your quitting her room directly, you are already ſufficiently ſhocked by her.'

"My lady durſt not diſobey him, and retired

tired, though I ſaw moſt unwillingly, with her woman."

'Send for father Bertrand, (again ſpoke Agatha, after the pauſe of a minute) for I am dying.'

'Nonſenſe, (exclaimed Monſieur D'Alembert) friend ſhe will be well enough by and by, and I am ſure I ſhall not permit my neighbourhood to be diſturbed to gratify her, ſaid my maſter.—['Ah! Mademoiſelle, I fear he is but a bad chriſtian']—I inſiſt, therefore, (continued he) that not a ſervant in this caſtle ſhall go for father Bertrand, except they chuſe immediately to be diſmiſſed my ſervice.' Like my poor lady, none of us durſt diſobey him, he took care indeed that we ſhould not, by continuing to watch us: In a little time Agatha relapſed, and died in a few minutes. She had ſcarcely breathed her laſt, ere ſhe turned quite black and ſwelled to a great ſize; and, notwithſtanding what my maſter and my maſter's friend ſays, we are all, that is, I mean, all the ſervants are of opinion, that ſhe was poiſoned; though how, or by whom, we cannot poſſibly conceive, as we

we know of no ſtranger that lately entered the caſtle, neither of any mortal that ſhe ever offended."

"'Tis a horrible affair, (ſaid Madeline) who was now firmly convinced that the murderers of the counteſs had deſtroyed her.

"My maſter has inſiſted, (cried Floretta) upon our making no comment, at leaſt no public comments on it; he declares if we do, he will have us ſeverely puniſhed. Poor Agatha, poor ſoul, there is nobody regrets her more than I do, though we had many little tiffs together; ſhe was ſo good-natured and uſed to make me ſuch a number of pretty little preſents in the courſe of the year; if ever I wanted any thing nice, nice ſweetmeats, or nice cordials, I had nothing to do but to aſk her for them. Mr. Lubin will be holding up his head now I ſuppoſe, I fancy ſhe has left him all her money, and no trifle either I dare ſay: we ſhall know this, however, to-morrow, for father Bertrand, who has her will, intends opening it then, if ſhe has left

left me a legacy, I ſhall buy mourning for her."

"Poor Agatha! (ſaid Madeline) ſhe little thought ſhe would have followed her dear lady ſo ſoon."

"True, Mademoiſelle, (cried Floretta) but you look faint, let me give you a glaſs of wine?"

"Firſt tell me (ſaid Madeline, on whoſe agitated mind the dreadful idea of poiſon dwelt) firſt tell me, (ſaid ſhe, ſtarting up) where or from whom did you procure this wine?"

"Lord bleſs me, Mademoiſelle, (cried Floretta) how you frighten me by your looks; why, I ſtole it from the butler."

"Well, ſince you got it from him, I will take ſome of it, (cried Madeline.) She felt her ſpirits ſomewhat revived by doing ſo, and ſhe then expreſſed her hopes that Floretta would ſtay with her till Madame D'Alembert came.

"'Tis quite out of my power to ſtay till then, (ſaid Floretta, inſtantly riſing, as if the very

very idea of doing ſo had terrified her) I muſt go, in order to watch for an opportunity for my lady to come to you."

"Haſten her to me I conjure you, (cried Madeline) as ſhe followed Floretta to the door to lock it after her.

"O that I was out of this houſe, (exclaimed Madeline, as ſhe turned from the door), danger and death ſurround me on every ſide."

She feared that Madame D'Alembert would oppoſe her quitting it, ſhe feared ſhe could not entreat her permiſſion to do ſo without betraying in ſome degree the motive which prompted that entreaty. Impreſſed with terror, ſhe knelt before a large crucifix near the head of the bed, and fervently implored the protection of heaven. As ſhe prayed ſhe was ſuddenly ſtartled by the creeking of the cloſet door: ſhe turned her head with quickneſs towards it, and beheld it half open; and the horror of that moment can better be conceived than deſcribed; a man whoſe face was

ſhaded

ſhaded by a large hat leaning from it, and earneſtly regarding her.

That the murderers of Agatha had by ſome means or other diſcovered her concealment, and from the garden had entered, through the cloſet window, with an intention of deſtroying her, was the dreadful idea which inſtantly ſtarted to her mind: all power of voice and motion forſook her, and ſtraining an eye of agony and horror on the terrifying ſtranger, ſhe ſtill continued kneeling: in this ſituation ſhe remained for about two minutes, when a ſoft tap came to the chamber door, the ſtranger haſtily retreated, and ſhut the cloſet door; Madeline with a ſcream of mingled joy and terror then ſtarted from the ground, and flying to the door opened it and beheld Madame D'Alembert and Floretta.

Madeline fell upon the neck of the former, but for many minutes could only give vent to her feelings by ſobs and broken ſentences.

"Oh!

"Oh! you are come at laſt: (ſhe exclaimed as ſhe preſſed her friend to her palpitating heart) you are come, the bleſſed inſtrument of providence, to ſave me from deſtruction; let us quit this chamber, and ſecure the door till the family can be alarmed and the cloſet ſearched."

"Heaven defend us! (cried Floretta, inſtantly retreating towards the gallery) what did you ſee within the cloſet, Mademoiſelle?"

"Nothing to alarm her, I am ſure," ſaid Madame D'Alembert.

"Nothing to alarm her!" repeated Madeline emphatically.

"No, (cried Madame D'Alembert) every avenue to that cloſet is ſecured; tis therefore impoſſible any one could have entered it without your knowledge; your imagination affected by the gloom of your apartment has deceived you."

"Good heaven! Madam, (exclaimed Madeline) would you try to make me diſbelieve my ſenſes?"

"To prove how certain I am they have been deceived, I will ſearch the cloſet myſelf," ſaid Madame D'Alembert, advancing as ſhe ſpoke into the chamber.

"Oh! do not be ſo raſh, (cried Madeline, graſping her arm) do not too late repent your temerity."

Madame D'Alembert made no reply, but diſengaging herſelf, ſhe directly went to the cloſet, and flinging open the door, exclaimed,

"Come, ſee whether or not I have been miſtaken."

Madeline approached her with trembling ſteps, and to her infinite amazement beheld there was no creature or trace of any creature within the cloſet.

"I am aſtoniſhed indeed, (ſaid ſhe) but myſterious as was the entrance or diſappearance of any perſon, that I ſaw ſome perſon is beyond a doubt."

"What

"What kind of perſon, Mademoiſelle?" aſked Floretta.

Madeline, as clearly as ſhe could, deſcribed him; but was hurt to find Madame D'Alembert ſtill appeared incredulous.

"You ſee, (ſaid ſhe) that the window, the only way by which any perſon could have entered the cloſet, is ſecured within ſide."

"I ſee it is, (cried Madeline) I muſt therefore only ſuppoſe that it was a being of the other world I ſaw."

"No, no, my dear Madeline, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert) I am ſure you have too much ſenſe to be ſuperſtitious."

"Ah! Madame, (replied Madeline) I ſhould not wonder if my reaſon was impaired by the ſhocks I have lately received. — Wonder not, (ſhe continued) if I declare I can no longer remain in this apartment. Oh! deareſt Madam, be not ſurpriſed if I entreat your permiſſion to return to my father; he

wiſhes to ſee me; and who can wonder if I ſigh to ſee him?"

"Unkind Madeline, (ſaid Madame D' Alembert, ſhedding tears) will you then leave me? Will you diſappoint the hopes I entertained of enjoying your ſociety whilſt I continued at the chateau? Your father, you muſt remember, in his laſt letter, aſſured you he did not expect, nay, he did not deſire you to return, till I was going to Paris; and from all diſagreeable confinement you will be releaſed in two days, as Monſieur D'Alembert then departs."

Diſtreſſed, confuſed, perplexed, Madeline ſtood ſilent, irreſolute how to act. Her fears, her reaſon urged her to quit the chateau directly, but her dread of being thought ungrateful, unfeeling, by Madame D'Alembert, if ſhe did do ſo, almoſt tempted her to ſtay.

"Ah! (cried ſhe to herſelf) how diſtreſſing a ſituation is mine; the fears which make me tremble to ſtay in the chateau I am bound by

by a ſolemn vow to conceal; and except I can aſſign better reaſons for wiſhing to leave it than I have already done, (and to do ſo is impoſſible) Madame D'Alembert will certainly be offended at my quitting it."

Hurt by her ſilence, by her too evident wiſh of departing, Madame D'Alembert ſuddenly wiped away her tears, and while a crimſon glow mantled her cheek, exclaimed,

"Againſt your inclination I will not detain you: no, Madeline, to inclination, not neceſſity, I muſt be indebted for your company. I ſee your reluctance to continue with me, and you are at liberty to depart the moment you pleaſe: I own —" and her voice faultered. "I had hoped, I had imagined, but it is no matter, 'tis not the firſt time I have been diſappointed,—diſappointed by thoſe on whom my heart placed its tendereſt affections, and by thoſe it believed would ſincerely return them."

Had

Had a dagger pierced the boſom of Madeline it could ſcarcely have given her more pain than did the words of her friend: eager to be reinſtated in her good opinion, ſhe forgot thoſe apprehenſions which but a moment before had agitated her ſoul, and determined no longer to perſiſt in deſiring to quit the caſtle.

"Oh! Madam, (cried ſhe, while tears trickled down her cheeks) how you have wounded me by your language: Do you then deem me unworthy? Do you think me ungrateful, forgetful of your kindneſs? Do you ſuppoſe I deſire to fly from you?"

"Your words have intimated ſuch a deſire, (replied Madame D'Alembert."

"Ah! Madame, (ſaid Madeline) when I uttered them my ſenſes were almoſt overpowered by terror; and if you wiſh me to continue in the caſtle, —"

"Wiſh you, (interrupted her friend) Ah! Madeline, (claſping her arms around her) do

you doubt my wiſhing you to do ſo? Yes, my love, 'tis my wiſh, my entreaty, my earneſt requeſt, that you ſtay in the caſtle till I quit it. You ſhall not continue in your preſent chamber, I came on purpoſe to remove you from it, for, to be brief, Monſieur D' Alembert ſuſpects your being in the caſtle, and may perhaps take it into his head to ſearch it; I am therefore going to conduct you to a place where he will never think of looking for you."

"Oh! Madame, (cried Madeline, and ſhe pauſed, fearful of again exciting the diſpleaſure of her friend, for ſhe had been on the point of again entreating permiſſion to return to her father) to what place, Madame, (aſked ſhe, ſuddenly recollecting herſelf) are you going to take me."

"Aſk me no queſtions at preſent, my love, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert) our ſecurity perhaps depends upon our ſilence; for I know not at this very moment but we may be watched; follow me, therefore, I entreat in ſilence."

She

She now led the way from the chamber, and, preceded by Floretta carrying a light, they ſtole with trembling ſteps along the gallery, from whence they deſcended by the private ſtairs; oppoſite to them was a low arched door, which they paſt through, and proceeded along a dark paſſage to another flight of ſteep ſtone ſtairs, which ſeemed to lead to the ſubterraneous parts of the caſtle. Here Madeline pauſed, and entreated to know whither they were taking her.

"Be not alarmed, my love, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert) be aſſured it is to a place of ſecurity."

The ſtairs were terminated by an iron door faſtened by an immenſe padlock. Floretta laid down the light, and taking down a large ruſty key with difficulty unlocked it, ſlowly opening with a grating noiſe, that abſolutely ſtruck terror into the ſoul of Madeline; it diſcovered to her view a black and hideous vault, dripping with damp, and from

which a cold vapour iſſued that nearly extinguiſhed the light; at its entrance Madeline again pauſed.

"Oh! heavens, (cried ſhe, ſhuddering and leaning againſt the wall) whither are we going?"

"Ah! Madeline, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert in a ſupplicating voice) after going ſo far will you at laſt diſappoint me? Be not alarmed I again repeat; if you wiſh to confirm my obligations to you do not heſitate now: your life, your ſafety, are more precious to me than my own, follow therefore without fear, without heſitation, wherever I may lead."

To do ſo, however, was ſcarcely in the power of Madeline, and Madame D'Alembert taking her hand, rather drew than led her through a ſucceſſion of gloomy vaults till they came to a low arched door, faſtened by a bolt: Floretta undrew it, and Madeline, to her infinite horror and amazement, found herſelf

herſelf in the chapel, beſide the grave of her benefactreſs, and near the ſpot where ſhe had received her fatal wound.

"Is this (ſaid ſhe, looking round her with terror and diſmay) the place of ſecurity you ſaid you were bringing me to? 'Tis all but ſecure; death and deſtruction hover o'er it. Oh! Madam! (wildly flinging herſelf at the feet of Madame D'Alembert) I cannot, cannot ſtay within it, for the murderer here takes his ſolitary rounds, to plunge his dagger in the heart of innocence and virtue."

"My love, (cried her friend, raiſing her from the ground) what do you mean? you ſtrike me with horror by your words, you ſhake my very ſoul."

The energy of Madame D'Alembert recalled the ſcattered ſenſes of Madeline, and made her reflect on the imprudence ſhe had been guilty of; ſhe ſhuddered as ſhe conſidered ſhe had nearly broken her ſolemn vow, and been on the point of planting un-

utterable and unappeaſeable ſorrows in the heart of Madame D'Alembert.—Exerting all her reſolution,

"Dear Madame, (ſaid ſhe) I know not what I ſaid; my imagination was diſordered by the gloom of the place."

"Surely my love, (ſaid her friend) you could not imagine I would be ſo cruel as to intend to keep you here: no—to-night, as ſoon as it is dark, either Floretta or I, accompanied by Lubin, will come to re-conduct you to the caſtle, where you ſhall be again put in poſſeſſion of your own apartment: my reaſon for bringing you to paſs the day here, was to prevent your being ſeen by Monſieur D'Alembert, who, I will acknowledge, threatened to ſearch the caſtle; but except he puts that threat in execution to-day, I am confident he never will, as to-morrow he will buſy paying viſits in the neighbourhood previous to his departure."

This

This aſſurance calmed the agitation of Madeline, and ſhe grew ſtill more compoſed when Madame D'Alembert declared ſhe would not leave her till the morning was farther advanced.

They now aſcended to the dormitory, which, as I have already ſaid, was in an habitable ſtate, and ſoon diſcovered a cell for Madeline to ſit in, containing the remains of a wooden bedſtead. Here Floretta left a ſmall baſket of proviſions, and ſhe and her lady continued with Madeline till the gloomy ſhadows of night had nearly fled, they then bade her adieu, and repeated their aſſurance of coming for her as ſoon as it grew dark.

Left to herſelf, the flurry of Madeline's ſpirits ſubſided, and ſhe was able calmly to reconſider what was paſt and to reflect on her preſent ſituation; as ſhe did ſo ſhe bitterly regretted not having inſiſted on returning immediately to her father; for her longer reſidence in the caſtle, expoſed her, ſhe

ſhe was convinced, to dangers of the moſt dreadful nature; that Agatha had fallen by the hands of the counteſs's murderers ſhe could not doubt, neither that they had entered the cloſet with an intention of deſtroying her; for their ſtrange and myſterious diſappearance from it ſhe accounted by ſuppoſing that behind ſome one of the large preſſes it contained there was a ſecret door.

"I cannot ſuppoſe, (ſaid ſhe) that one diſappointment will make them lay aſide their horrible intentions; by remaining in the caſtle I expoſe myſelf to their continual attempts, attempts which may perhaps at laſt be too ſucceſsful, I muſt fly it therefore, (continued ſhe) however unpleaſant, however agonizing to my feelings to excite the diſpleaſure of Madame D'Alembert; I muſt, when next we meet, entreat, implore her to let me return to my father."

As ſoon as the day was advanced Madeline deſcended to the chapel, in order to try and

and divert her mind from the dreadful ideas which depreſſed it, by examining the curious monuments within the building; the terror of Madeline's ſoul now gave way to awe and melancholy,—ſhe felt chilled, ſhe felt oppreſſed beyond expreſſion, as ſhe viewed the records of mortality, and trod the ſilent ſolitary aiſles, which awfully echoed her lighteſt ſtep, and whoſe gloom the beams of the ſun that darted through the painted caſements could not diſſipate.

She had often (to uſe the words of an author, not leſs affecting than ſublime) * "Walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff, ſometimes trod the vaſt ſpaces of the lonely deſert, and penetrated the inmoſt receſſes of the dreary cavern, but had never, never before beheld nature louring with ſo tremendous an aſpect,—never before felt ſuch impreſſions of awe ſtriking cold upon her heart, as now beneath the black browed arches, amidſt the mouldy walls

* HERVEY.

walls of the Monaſtery, where melancholy, deepeſt melancholy ſpread her raven wings."

Ah! if the children of vanity, of diſſipation, ſometimes viſited a ſcene like this, ſurely (thought ſhe) their hearts would be amended; they would be convinced of the littleneſs of this world, of the folly of placing their entire affections upon it, when they beheld "nobility arrayed in a winding ſheet, grandeur mouldering in an urn, and the high graſs waving round the heroe's tomb, while his duſty banner, the banner which he once unfurled to ſtrike conſternation on his foes, hung idly fluttering o'er it."

At the grave of her benefactreſs ſhe pauſed.

"Here (ſaid ſhe) gratitude and affection muſt ever linger. Oh! my friend, my mother, never can thy kindneſs be obliterated from my heart, never can my heart be conſoled for thy loſs: alas! from thy deep ſleep the ſighs of thy Madeline cannot awake thee!

Cold

Cold is that breaſt which was the repoſitory of her ſorrows, ſilent the tongue which poured ſympathy upon them."

When it grew dark ſhe aſcended to the cell, for the gloom of the chapel then grew too awful for her to bear. After ſitting a conſiderable time there in a ſtate of painful impatience, ſhe went to a large folding door, which terminated the gallery, and commanded an extenſive view of the valley, to try if ſhe could diſcover any ſign of Madame D' Alembert or Floretta, who had ſaid, as I ſhould previouſly have mentioned, that they would come to her through the garden; but no ſtep, no voice, could ſhe hear, no glimpſe of any object could ſhe diſtinguiſh.

"They cannot have forgotten me, (ſaid ſhe) they cannot let me paſs the night amidſt the dead; and yet 'tis far beyond the hour I expected them."

Her heart almoſt died away as ſhe viewed the oppoſite mountains, whoſe dark brows ſeemed riſing above the clouds, and from whoſe black cavities the wind iſſued with hoarſe murmurs, like the yells of midnight murderers.

"Ah! (cried ſhe, ſhuddering) within thoſe cavities perhaps the murderers of the counteſs—of Agatha—the intended murderers of Madeline, may be now concealed; before to-morrow perhaps I may be cold and inanimate, like thoſe o'er whoſe ſculptured urns I ſo recently bent."

At this inſtant ſhe thought ſhe heard the echo of a light ſtep outſide the building; her heart palpitated, ſhe bent forward, and caught a glimpſe of a female figure habited in black, gliding into the Monaſtery and followed by a man wrapped up in a large dark coat: That it was Madame D'Alembert and Lubin ſhe beheld ſhe could not doubt, and in a tranſport of joy ſhe inſtantly flew to the ſtairs

ſtairs to meet them, but at the head of the ſtairs ſhe pauſed, and trembled, for as the low ſound of voices reached her from below, ſhe fancied ſhe heard the voices of total ſtrangers: ſhe held in her breath that ſhe might be better enabled to aſcertain whether or not her fears were juſtly founded, and was ſoon convinced that it was neither Madame D'Alembert nor Lubin ſhe had ſeen enter.

Alive only to one dreadful idea, to one apprehenſion, ſhe now believed her fate approaching, and looked round for ſome place to ſecrete herſelf; ſhe looked in vain however; for mouldering cells and narrow paſſages, choaked with rubbiſh only, met her view.

At length ſhe recollected, that near the cell where ſhe had been ſitting there was a long and winding gallery, pretty free from rubbiſh, and which Madame D'Alembert had informed her led to the innermoſt receſſes of the

the building; down this ſhe determined to fly.

At the head of the ſtaircaſe which faced the body of the chapel was a large diſmantled window, through which the moon, now beginning to riſe, ſhed a faint light, but ſtill ſufficient to render objects conſpicuous. Madeline therefore feared ſhe ſhould be ſeen as ſhe croſſed the ſtaircaſe, ſhe knew however there was no alternative, and that ſhe muſt either run the riſque of being diſcovered now, or remain where in a few minutes later ſhe was ſure of being ſo.

Madeline accordingly ſtept forward, but though her ſtep was too light to be heard, her figure was perceived, and ſhe inſtantly heard a ſhout from the chapel, and aſcending ſteps. Fear lent her wings, ſhe flew to the gallery, but, juſt as ſhe was darting into it, a large iron hook entangled her cloaths: with a ſtrength which deſperation only could have given her, ſhe attempted to tear them from

it

it; but 'ere her efforts had ſucceeded her arm was rudely ſeized; ſhe immediately turned her head and beheld the inflamed countenance of a man glaring upon her; the moment he ſaw her face he ſtarted back with a look which ſeeemd to intimate ſhe was not the perſon he expected to have ſeen, but the faint pleaſure which this idea gave was quickly deſtroyed by his drawing a ſmall dagger from his breaſt with which he again approached Madeline. Her death ſhe now believed inevitable, and ſtaggering back a few paces, "Ah! heaven have mercy upon me!" ſhe ſaid, and dropped lifeleſs on the floor.

As ſhe recovered her ſenſes ſhe felt ſome one chafiing her hands.

"Ah! (ſhe cried, in a faint voice) do you reſtore me to life but to have the pleaſure of depriving me of it?"

"My Madeline, my love, (exclaimed the ſoft voice of Madame D'Alembert) what has thus diſordered your ſenſes?"

Madeline

Madeline raiſed her head from the ground, ſhe looked at Madame D'Alembert,—ſhe looked from her, and beheld Lubin.

"Gracious heaven! (cried ſhe) do I dream or have I been in a frightful dream from which you have juſt awakened me?"

"My deareſt girl, (ſaid Madame D' Alembert) what has alarmed you?"

"Alarmed me? (repeated Madeline, wildly ſtaring at her) Oh, heavens! ſurely it is but an inſtant ago ſince I ſaw the poignard of the murderer raiſed againſt me?"

"You terrify me," exclaimed her friend.

"Terrify you, (repeated Madeline, ſtarting from the ground) Oh, let us fly this dreadful place directly, for even now perhaps our lives may be in danger."

"Don't be frightened, Mademoiſelle, (cried Lubin) I am not unarmed."

"You ſtrike me with horror, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert) and take from me the power of moving: tell me what danger it is we have to apprehend, for no trace of any being

being, of any thing to alarm you, did we diſcover, and the ſwoon in which we found you we imputed to illneſs inſtead of terror."

Madeline in a few haſty words informed her of the manner in which ſhe had been terrified, and whilſt ſhe gratefully returned her thanks to heaven for her ſafety, ſhe expreſſed her aſtoniſhment at being uninjured.

"Oh! my love, (cried her friend, claſping her arms round her as ſhe concluded) never, never can I requite you for what you you have ſuffered on my account; never can I forgive myſelf for having expoſed you to ſuch alarms."

"I wiſh with all my ſoul (ſaid Lubin, graſping the ruſty ſword he had brought from the chateau) I wiſh with all my ſoul I had caught the villain, I'll warrant if I had I ſhould ſoon have made him confeſs what brought him hither; his companion I ſuppoſe, was only a man in diſguiſe."

"Who

"Who theſe myſterious ſtrangers were I cannot poſſibly conceive, (cried Madame D'Alembert) but that they certainly did not mean to harm you, however appearances may make you believe to the contrary, I think; for had ſuch been their intention they moſt aſſuredly could have accompliſhed that intention 'ere we came."

"They only deſigned to rob her I ſuppoſe, (ſaid Lubin) and frighten her to ſilence; pray ſearch your pockets, Mademoiſelle, to try if you have loſt any thing."

"There was nothing of any value in them, (replied Madeline) ſo I need not take that trouble."

"They muſt certainly (reſumed Lubin) have retreated, on hearing us, down that gallery," pointing to the one Madeline had attempted to conceal herſelf in; "I would give all the money I am worth for ſomebody now to aſſiſt me in ſearching it."

"Oh, Madeline! (cried her friend) I can no longer attempt to detain you: I came to you

you half determined to let you return immediately to your father, as Monſieur D'Alembert, contrary to his firſt intention, has reſolved on paſſing a month in the chateau; but I am now, in conſequence of what I have heard, reſolved on doing ſo; to-night therefore we part, and heaven knows whether we ſhall ever meet again."

"To-night!" repeated Madeline amazed.

"Yes, (replied Madame D'Alembert, whoſe tears ſcarcely permitted her to ſpeak) to-night—was your journey poſtponed till to-morrow, Monſieur D'Alembert muſt diſcover that you have hitherto been concealed in the chateau, and the conſequences of ſuch a diſcovery would be extremely diſagreeable to me."

"Heaven forbid then (ſaid Madeline) I ſhould delay my journey; and yet—ſhe pauſed, ſhe recollected herſelf—and ſince her friend was anxious for her immediate departure, reſolved not to mention the fears ſhe felt at the idea of travelling by night.

"I

"I confide you to the care of Lubin, (cried Madame D'Alembert) I know he is faithful, I know he is brave, and will fulfil the truſt I repoſe in him."

"I humbly thank your Ladyſhip for your good opinion of me, (ſaid Lubin, taking off his hat and making a low bow) it ſhall be my ſtudy to deſerve it: I am ſure I ſhould be an ungrateful varlet if I would not go through fire and water for you, or any one beloved by you; and Mademoiſelle may be aſſured, while I have an arm to ſtretch out in her defence, I will protect her."

"At the extremity of the wood ſurrounding the chateau, is the cottage of my nurſe, (ſaid Madame D'Alembert, addreſſing Madeline) thither Lubin muſt now conduct you, and there he will procure horſes for your journey; for I am afraid to have any taken from the ſtables here, leaſt a diſcovery ſhould be the conſequence of doing ſo: do not delay longer than is abſolutely neceſſary at the cottage, I have important reaſons for wiſhing you to get to a diſtance from the chateau,

chateau, as ſoon as poſſible, when you are about half way between it and your father's houſe you can ſtop to reſt."

"Yes, (replied Lubin) there is a ſnug houſe juſt thereabouts, where we can put up. You may recollect, Mademoiſelle,(turning to Madeline) that you and my poor lady dined there laſt ſpring in your way to the chateau?"

A deep ſigh ſtole from the breaſt of Madeline at the recollection of that happy period; and Madame D'Alembert was for a few minutes unable to ſpeak.

"In the courſe of a few days, Madeline, (ſaid ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe had recovered her voice) you may expect a letter, containing a full explanation of every thing that appeared myſterious in my conduct towards you. After ſuffering ſo much on my account you ſurely are entitled to know every ſecret of my heart—Oh! Madeline, that heart can never forget the gratitude it owes you."

"Ah!

"Ah, Madam, (cried Madeline, while tears trickled down her cheeks), do not hurt me by ſpeaking in this manner; all that I could do, could never never repay the numerous favours I have received from you, 'tis I only have a right to ſpeak of gratitude."

"Perhaps (reſumed her friend) we may meet again: I will indulge ſuch a hope, it will ſooth, it will conſole me in ſome degree for your loſs. Oh! Madeline, 'tis with pain, 'tis with agony I conſent to our ſeparation, but without murmuring I muſt ſubmit to that as well as to many other ſorrows."

She now took the trembling hand of Madeline, and they deſcended to the valley, thro' which they ſilently and ſwiftly paſſed, nor ſtopped 'till they came within ſight of the chateau; Madame D'Alembert then pauſed, to give a laſt farewell to Madeline: locked in each others arms they continued many minutes unable to ſpeak, unable to ſeparate; at length Madame D'Alembert ſummoning all her reſolution to her aid, diſengaged herſelf

ſelf from Madeline. "Farewell, (ſaid ſhe) may heaven for ever bleſs, protect you, and make you as happy as you deſerve to be." She turned away as ſhe ſpoke as if fearful her reſolution would fail her if ſhe continued another moment with Madeline, and haſtened to the chateau.

Silent and immoveable Madeline ſtood gazing after her till addreſſed by Lubin.

"Come, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid he) we had better not delay any longer, 'twill be a late hour even as it is, I can aſſure you, 'ere we reach the houſe where we are to reſt, this way, Mademoiſelle."

Almoſt inſtinctively Madeline followed him to a door which opened from the garden to the lawn, but here ſhe again ſtopped; the variety of diſtreſſing and terrifying ſcenes ſhe had lately gone through had almoſt bewildered her ſenſes, and ſhe now felt as if ſhe

ſhe ſcarcely knew where ſhe was, or whither ſhe was going.

"Have I really taken my laſt leave of Madame D'Alembert? Am I really quitting the chateau?" ſaid ſhe, earneſtly looking at Lubin.

"Lord, yes, that you have indeed Mademoiſelle," anſwered he, ſomewhat ſurpriſed and alarmed.

"Gracious heaven! (cried ſhe, with folded hands) if any perſon two months ago had told me I ſhould quit the chateau in the manner I am at preſent doing, what little credit ſhould I have given to their words.—

"Oh life! (ſhe ſighed to herſelf) how rapid are thy revolutions! — But a ſhort time ago and that very manſion which I now leave with ſecreſy and precipitation, I entered with every hope of finding a permanent and happy home within it; but a ſhort time ago and it was a refuge for diſtreſs, an aſylum for innocence

innocence and virtue; but now the mendicant may wander to it in vain for relief, innocence and virtue ſeek protection without receiving it.

"With its virtues its honours muſt decline; for he who has not a heart to cheriſh the former, muſt ſurely want a ſpirit to ſupport the latter."

"No more then ſhall the arm of valour unfurl its banners to the call of glory; no more ſhall the records of fame be ſwelled by its achievements; no more ſhall noble emulation be inſpired by them.

"With its late owner its greatneſs and happineſs departed; they are ſet, but ſet not like that ſun whoſe ſplendours ſo lately brightened this ſcene, to riſe again with renovated glory."

CHAP. III.

" Forlorn and loſt I tread,
" With fainting ſteps and ſlow,
" Where wilds, immeaſurably ſpread,
" Seem length'ning as I go."

"I HOPE, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid Lubin, on hearing her ſigh as ſhe turned from the chateau) you are not frightened at the idea of going through the wood?"

"No;" replied Madeline.

"So much the better, ſo much the better, (ſaid Lubin) but indeed I ſhould not wonder if you were.'"

"Why,

"Why, (cried Madeline) is it dangerous?"

"Not over ſafe indeed, but don't be frightened, Mademoiſelle, on ſeeing her ſuddenly ſtop, I ſhall bring you the ſhorteſt path through it."

"And when we get to the road we ſhall be ſafe, (cried Madeline) as there are cottages ſcattered all along it?"

"Yes, (ſaid Lubin) but if you were in danger and expected any aſſiſtance from their inhabitants, you would be ſadly diſappointed, for thoſe kind of people are ſo fatigued after their day's labour, that when once they get to bed one might as well try to waken the dead, as waken them: but don't be frightened, Mademoiſelle."

"Frightened! (repeated Madeline) it is ſcarcely poſſible to be otherwiſe from the manner in which you talk; you have really made me tremble ſo that I can ſcarcely move."

"If you would condeſcend to accept my arm, Mademoiſelle, we could make infinitely more haſte than we do at preſent."

Madeline accepted the offer of Lubin, nor did they again pauſe till they had reached the cottage they were bound to; they found it ſhut up for the night, and Lubin knocked loudly with his ſtick againſt the door, but without effect.

"You ſee, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid he, after the ſilence of a few minutes) I was right in ſaying it was next to impoſſible to waken theſe cottagers."

"Poor people, (cried Madeline) it is a pity to diſturb them."

"Oh, not at all, (ſaid Lubin) they can go to bed immediately again, you know, and I warrant they will not reſt the worſe for having had their ſlumbers interrupted."

He now repeated the knocks with a violence that ſhook the door: at laſt a window was opened, and an old man, putting out his head, aſked who came there.

"Why,

"Why, a friend, (replied Lubin) and a deviliſh time he has been trying to gain admittance: Come, come, Mr. Colin, you may open the door without any grumbling, for by the time I have taken to waken you it is pretty evident you have had a good ſpell."

"Pray what brings you here at this time of night?" cried a ſhrill female voice.

"I am come by the command of my lady to borrow two horſes, (anſwered Lubin) I muſt get them directly, and without being aſked whither I am going with them; pray make haſte, I have a lady waiting with me for them."

"A lady!" the old couple repeated, and both thruſt their heads together out of the window, to ſee whether he ſpoke truth or not.

The door was now opened in a minute, and the nurſe invited Madeline into the cottage, while her huſband went forth with Lubin to a little ſhed adjoining it, to prepare the horſes: ſhe had ſeen Madeline before at

the cottage, and almoſt immediately recollected her; ſhe was all amazement at now beholding her, nor could forbear inquiring the reaſon of it. Madeline waved the diſcourſe, and expreſſed her regret at her having been diſturbed.

The horſes were ready in a few minutes, and the good couple having received a ſtrict caution againſt mentioning her to any one, ſhe was aſſiſted by Lubin to mount, and they ſet off at a ſmart pace.

"How very curious old Colin and his wife were! (ſaid Lubin) I dare ſay they would have given half they were worth to know the cauſe of our travelling by night, and not getting horſes at the chateau."

"I don't wonder at their being ſo," cried Madeline.

"No, nor I neither, Mademoiſelle; 'tis a comical thing to be ſure our rambling about at night; it puts me in mind of the Fairy Tales

Tales I have read; heaven be praiſed our journey is but a ſhort one."

They did not ſlacken their pace till they reached the gloomy foreſt, in which the gothic caſtle of Montmorency ſtood; the heart of Madeline ſunk as ſhe approached it, and ſhe trembled as ſhe entered amidſt its awful ſhades, and heard the breeze ſweeping over them with a hollow murmur: the courage of Lubin too ſeemed a little to fail him.

"I wiſh with all my ſoul Mademoiſelle, (ſaid he) that the houſe we are going tow as at this ſide of the foreſt inſtead of the other."

"I wiſh it was, (cried Madeline) or that we could get ſhelter elſewhere."

"That is impoſſible, Mademoiſelle, (replied he) ſo we muſt only make what haſte we can to it; Lord how glad I ſhall be when I find myſelf there; ſo will you, I dare ſay, Mademoiſelle."

"Undoubtedly, (replied Madeline) the recollection of paſt danger will heighten preſent pleaſure."

"I wiſh all our dangers were over, and our pleaſures come, (cried Lubin) but Lord, Mademoiſelle, the very worſt of our way is ſtill before us; the middle of the foreſt, which we have not yet reached, is a grand rendezvous, they ſay, for a gang of banditti, that have long infeſted the country; there they meet as ſoon as it grows dark, and ſettle their plans for the night. Well, of all places in the world I ſhould not like to be robbed in a foreſt, it would be ſuch an eaſy matter afterwards to murder one."

"Pray, Lubin, (ſaid Madeline) do not talk any more in this manner, for if you do you'll make me tremble ſo I ſhall not be able to keep my ſeat."

"I aſk your pardon, Mademoiſelle; I am ſure the laſt thing in the world I meant to do was to frighten you: To be ſure I wiſh I had brought a pocket piſtol or two with me from the

the chateau, inſtead of this ruſty ſword, to defend you; though, after all, what would avail my ſingle arm againſt a whole gang? Heaven help us if they meet us! poor Colin may then go whiſtle for his horſes; though upon recollection my Lady would certainly recompence him for their loſs."

"Drop this dreadful ſubject I entreat you," ſaid Madeline, in a tremulous voice.

"Come cheer up, Mademoiſelle (exclaimed Lubin, who was now thorougly convinced he had alarmed Madeline) we will keep as near as poſſible to the extremity of the foreſt, and if we ride faſt we ſhall ſoon reach the houſe."

As faſt as the intricacies of the path would permit them to go, they went, and at laſt reached in ſafety their deſtined goal.

Here Madeline, who had hitherto with difficulty kept her ſeat, alighted; but how impoſſible to deſcribe her diſappointment, and the diſappointment of her companion, when

after repeatedly knocking at the door they were at length convinced that the houſe was uninhabited. They ſtood for ſome minutes looking at each other, in a conſternation that deprived them of ſpeech.

Lubin was the firſt who broke ſilence.

"What's to be done, Mademoiſelle?" ſaid he.

"I am ſure I can't tell," anſwered Madeline in a faint voice, and leaning againſt the wall.

"Faith, (cried Lubin) I have a good mind to break open the door and obtain ſhelter for the night, though, to my ſorrow, I can't get a good ſupper; I meant to have ordered a nice omelet, the moment I arrived."

"For heaven's ſake do not attempt to break open the door, (exclaimed Madeline) the conſequences of ſuch an action might be dreadful."

"What's to be done then I again aſk? (ſaid Lubin) you would not wiſh, I ſuppoſe,

to ſit down here without any ſhelter for the remainder of the night; neither would you, I ſuppoſe, like to mount your horſe and go ten miles farther in ſearch of another habitation, and nearer you need not expect to find one that would receive you."

"I am not able to go in ſearch of another, (replied Madeline) the ſhocks I received and the fatigue I have gone through this night have quite overpowered me."

"Lord (cried Lubin, ſtarting) perhaps the Marquis of Montmorenci may be come to his caſtle, only you were afraid Mademoiſelle of that part of the foreſt, we might have paſt it, and been able perhaps to have diſcovered."

"And even if we had (ſaid Madeline) what benefit ſhould we have derived from that circumſtance?"

"Why we ſhould certainly have obtained a lodging in his caſtle."

"I ſhould be afraid to diſturb the family at this late hour," cried Madeline heſitatingly.

"Lord I am ſure (cried Lubin) it is better to diſturb them than run the riſque of being murdered here."

"But ſuppoſe they are not there?" ſaid Madeline.

"Why then, Mademoiſelle, (cried Lubin haſtily) we will try to find ſome niche about the wall where we can ſhelter ourſelves for the night, ſince you are ſo ſcrupulous about the door of this houſe."

"But, (ſaid Madeline) though the family may not be come to the caſtle, there may be inhabitants in it."

"Oh! I underſtand you, Mademoiſelle, (interrupted Lubin) you are afraid that ſome of the banditti I was telling you of may have taken up their quarters there; but of that I am ſure there's no danger, the caſtle was too well ſecured for them to gain admittance; ſo that except we find the right inhabitants in it, I am confident we ſhall not find any: come, Mademoiſelle, let's loſe no time, will you accept my arm, or would you chuſe to mount again?"

"No,

"No, (replied ſhe) I would rather walk."

"Go before me then, (ſaid he) and I will lead the horſes."

Madeline obeyed him though with difficulty, for ſhe felt ſo agitated that ſhe could ſcarcely drag her weary limbs along. As ſhe approached the caſtle her eyes were anxiouſly faſtened on it, in hopes of diſcovering a light or ſome other ſign of inhabitation, but all was dark and dreary around.

"I am afraid, Lubin, (ſaid ſhe, ſtopping and mournfully ſhaking her head) I am afraid the family have not yet returned."

"I do not quite deſpair about that, Mademoiſelle,(replied Lubin); at ſo very late an hour as this you know we could not expect to have found any of them up."

"How ſhall we make ourſelves heard by them then?" aſked Madeline.

"Why I ſuppoſe we ſhall find a great bell at the gate, which I ſhall ring."

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"But if the Marquis's family (cried Madeline, ſhuddering at the very idea) ſhould not be in the caſtle, may not the ringing of that bell expoſe us to deſtruction? Do you forget the banditti you told me infeſted this foreſt?"

"Lord (ſaid Lubin) that's true, the bell would certainly alarm them—well Mademoiſelle, I'll tell you what we can do: I recollect taking notice laſt ſpring as I paſſed this caſtle, of the very bad repair in which the court wall was, ſo we will ſearch about it for ſome gap to clamber through."

He accordingly faſtened the horſes to the gate, and had not long ſearched about 'ere he found a place which Madeline eaſily got over.

Immediately oppoſite this ſpot was an arched gateway, which led through a wing of the building to another court; to this Lubin conducted Madeline, who trembled ſo ſhe could ſcarcely ſtand, but the moment ſhe entered

entered it ſhe ſhrunk back, affrighted at the deſolation ſhe beheld, and fancied in the hoarſe murmurs of the wind that ſighed thro' the ſhattered buildings ſurrounding it, ſhe heard portentous ſounds.

On each ſide of the gateway were ſeveral doors; Lubin perceived one of them open, and through this he led his trembling companion: they then found themſelves in a ſpacious ſtone hall, light with one gothic window, through which the twilight now caſt a dim religious light, and oppoſite to which was a folding door, of heavy workmanſhip: there was a damp ſmell in this hall, which proclaimed it long deſerted, and ſtruck cold to the very heart of Madeline.

"Shall I go now, Mademoiſelle, (aſked Lubin) and try whether there is any one within the caſtle?"

"Not yet, (replied Madeline, ſitting down upon a little bench which ran round the hall) "not yet," ſaid ſhe in a faint voice, and involuntarily

voluntarily leaning her head againſt his arm for ſupport.

Lubin was terrified, he almoſt believed her dying.

"Dear, dear, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid he) cheer up, I ſhall not be long abſent; and whether there is or is not any one in the caſtle, we are ſecure for the night."

Madeline grew a little better, and no longer oppoſed his going. It was ſome time 'ere he could open the folding door; when he did it diſcloſed to his view a long dark paſſage, down which the anxious eyes of Madeline purſued him till ſlowly cloſing, the door hid him from her view.

Scarcely was ſhe left to herſelf 'ere ſhe regretted not having accompanied him, for as her eye timidly glanced around, ſhe ſhuddered at the profound gloom in which ſhe was involved; never had ſhe felt more forlorn,

lorn, ſcarcely ever more diſconſolate: the manner in which her firſt journey had been taken recurred to her recollection, and the contraſt ſhe drew between her ſituation now and then, heightened all the horrors of the preſent: ſo true is it, that the remembrance of paſt joys aggravates our preſent miſeries.

From her melancholy retroſpection ſhe was rouſed by the opening of the door, tho' expecting Lubin, her ſpirits were ſo weak ſhe involuntarily ſtarted from her ſeat.

"Don't be frightened Mademoiſelle, (cried Lubin, in a whiſpering voice, as he ſoftly cloſed the door after him) 'tis only I."

"Well, Lubin, (ſaid Madeline, almoſt gaſping for breath through agitation) what intelligence—did you ſee any one?"

"I can't tell you now, Mademoiſelle, (cried he) we muſt be gone."

"Oh, heavens! (ſaid Madeline) is there any danger."

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"This is no time to aſk queſtions, (replied Lubin) no place I can aſſure you to anſwer them; I again repeat it—we muſt be gone!"

To move was ſcarcely in the power of Madeline, ſo much was ſhe overpowered by the terror Lubin's words had given her, ſhe gave him her hand however, and he led her from the hall: but ſcarcely had they proceeded a few yards down the gateway, 'ere he ſtarted, ſuddenly ſtopped, and in a low voice exclaimed,

"There are ſome of them!"

"Gracious heaven! (cried Madeline) what do you mean?"

To repeat her queſtion was unneceſſary, for at that inſtant ſhe beheld two men croſſing the court. Lubin now drew, or rather carried her back to the hall, for her tremor had increaſed to ſuch a degree that ſhe could not ſtand, and he was compelled to ſupport her upon the ſeat on which ſhe ſunk.

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In a voice of agony ſhe now conjured him to tell her what they had to fear, declaring that no certainty almoſt of danger could be more dreadful than the ſuſpence ſhe at preſent endured.

"Since you muſt know, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid he) we have nothing more to fear than being robbed and murdered!"

"Good heaven! (exclaimed Madeline) do you think the men we juſt beheld are murderers?"

"Yes," replied Lubin, ruefully ſhaking his head.

"What reaſon have you for ſo horrible a ſuſpicion?" aſked Madeline.

"Why you muſt know, Mademoiſelle, I had not proceeded far down the dark paſſage 'ere I heard a noiſe, which ſounded to me like the clattering of arms. A ſudden panic inſtantly ſeized me, and I had a great mind to return directly and lead you from the caſtle: this, however, was but the thought of

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a minute, for when I reflected there was no probability of getting a lodging elſewhere, and how diſmal a thing it would be to paſs the remainder of the night in the open air, I reſolved on going forward and trying to diſcover whether there were friends within.

"I accordingly proceeded till I came to the foot of a narrow flight of ſtairs, down which a faint light glimmered: up theſe I ſoftly aſcended to a half open door, from which the light iſſued, and peeping in I beheld a large ill-furniſhed chamber, with half a dozen men in it, as ill looking dogs as ever I beheld, before a huge fire, cleaning ſome fire arms: but that was not all— in one corner of the chamber lay the body of a man dreadfully mangled. The dogs laughed as they purſued their work, and talked of the exploits they had achieved and ſtill hoped to achieve with their arms; in ſhort, it was ſoon evident to me, that the banditti I had mentioned to you had thought proper to make free with the caſtle in the Marquis's abſence, ſo I made the beſt of my way back to you,

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in order to take you directly from it; an intention which the rogues have diſappointed."

"The horſes will betray us," ſaid Madeline in an agony.

"Aye, ſo I fear, (cried Lubin) it was deviliſh unlucky my faſtening them to the gate."

"Hark! (exclaimed Madeline) do you not hear a noiſe?"

Both were inſtantly ſilent, and then clearly heard a violent ſhouting in the outer court. The dreadful fears it excited were ſoon however a little appeaſed by its growing fainter, as if the perſons it came from had moved to a greater diſtance.

"I think, (cried Lubin, after the ſilence of a few minutes, and gaſping for the breath he had before ſuppreſt) I think I will now have another peep to try whether or not the coaſt is clear."

Madeline

Madeline riſing declared ſhe would accompany him, that if there was an opportunity for eſcaping, not a moment might be loſt.

Again therefore they quitted the hall, but had ſcarcely done ſo 'ere they once more retreated to it with precipitation, on hearing the ſhouting in the court renewed with double violence.

"The horſes have, I am ſure, as you feared, betrayed us; (cried Lubin) and I make no doubt ſearch is now making for us."

"Oh! Lubin, (ſaid Madeline) is there no way of eſcaping the impending danger?"

"None that I know of, (anſwered he) but don't be ſo frightened Mademoiſelle, I promiſe you (he continued, graſping his ruſty ſword) thoſe that attempt to harm you ſhall pay dearly for doing ſo: the villains perhaps may not be ſuch villains as you imagine, they may have ſome little mercy in their hearts."

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As he ſpoke the gateway reſounded with the ſhouting, and a light glimmered beneath the door opening from it.

Madeline turned her eyes with dreadful expectation towards it; the next minute it was flung open, and ſeveral men entered: Her firſt impulſe was to fall at their feet, and ſupplicate their mercy, but as ſhe attempted to riſe her ſenſes totally receded, and ſhe fell fainting upon the out ſtretched arm of Lubin.

When her reaſon returned ſhe found herſelf ſupported between two women, and ſurrounded by men, amongſt whom Lubin ſtood talking with earneſtneſs. She looked round her wildly, too much diſordered to underſtand the words of Lubin, or obſerve whether the appearance of the men was calculated to remove or confirm her fears.

Her clear perception was however ſoon reſtored by Lubin, who almoſt as ſoon as he ſaw her ſenſes reſtored, exclaimed

"Come,

"Come, cheer up, Mademoiſelle, after all our fright we are in no danger; the noble owner of the caſtle has returned to it, and the fine fellows I ſaw cleaning the fire-arms, and whom I took, humbly begging their pardons, for robbers, which to be ſure was a great wonder, ſeeing what honeſt countenances they have, were ſome of his Lordſhip's ſervants."

Madeline raiſed her eyes in thankfulneſs to heaven, and Lubin proceeded to inform her that the body he had ſeen had been one of the banditti, who the night before had made an unſucceſsful attempt upon the caſtle, and that the tumult in the court originated from the domeſtics ſuſpecting, in conſequence of finding the horſes faſtened to the gate, that they were again lurking about it.

"Now that you find yourſelf in no diſhonorable hands, I hope, Madam, you will ſpeedily recover your ſpirits," ſaid an elderly man, whoſe looks and manner denoted a conſcious

ſcious ſuperiority over the reſt of his companions.

Madeline thanked him for the hope he had expreſſed, and was going to explain the cauſe of her coming to the caſtle, when Lubin haſtily interrupted her by ſaying, he had already explained every circumſtance.

"My Lord (cried the man who had before addreſſed her, reſpectfully bowing as he ſpoke) has been already appriſed of your ſituation, and has commiſſioned me, Madam, to preſent his compliments to you, and to entreat you to have the goodneſs to excuſe his not doing the honors of his houſe himſelf, which the weak ſtate of his health and ſpirits prevents: he alſo deſired me to requeſt you would honor his ſervants by your commands, and not think of quitting the caſtle till perfectly recovered from your late fatigue and fright."

Madeline felt truly grateful for this politeneſs, and rather happy than otherwiſe at not being introduced to the Marquis de Montmorenci, as her exhauſted ſtrength and ſpirits left her little inclination or ability to converſe with a ſtranger.

The houſekeeper, who was one of the women that had ſupported her, now conducted her down the paſſage, Lubin had before explored, to a large apartment near its termination; where, in a few minutes, a table was covered with refreſhments. Lubin was taken to the ſervants hall, and Madeline, ſomewhat cheered by the knowledge of her ſafety, partook of the things provided for her: ſhe found her companion extremely loquacious, and ſo ſhe talked, not much caring whether it was queſtions ſhe aſked or anſwered.

Madeline inquired how long the Marquis had been indiſpoſed.

"Many,

"Many, many years, (replied the houſe-keeper, with a melancholy ſhake of the head) after the heavy afflictions he has ſuſtained, it would be a wonder indeed if he had retained either his health or ſpirits."

Madeline, who perfectly recollected the account ſhe had already heard of him, now made no inquiry concerning the nature of thoſe afflictions; but of her own accord the houſekeeper gave her a narrative of them.

"The Count St. Julian, his ſon, (continued ſhe) was certainly one of the fineſt youths I ever beheld; his death undoubtedly cauſed that of my Lady Marchioneſs: 'tis generally imagined he fell by the hands of banditti, but ſome people have their doubts about that, and I own I am one of them."

"Good heaven! (cried Madeline) who but banditti could be ſuſpected of murdering him?"

The houſekeeper ſhook her head—

"There were people, Mademoiſelle, but"—as if ſuddenly recollecting herſelf, "it does not become me to tell family ſecrets."

The curioſity of Madeline was highly raiſed, but into ſecrets which indeed ſhe thought properly withheld, ſhe could not think of prying.

"Would not the ſympathizing ſociety of friends be of ſome ſervice to your Lord?" aſked Madeline, after the pauſe of a minute.

"I ſcarcely think it would, Madam, (anſwered the houſekeeper) but at any rate he will not try whether it would have any effect upon him; he lives the moſt ſtrange and ſolitary life imaginable, rambling about from one ſeat to another, and never admitting any one to his preſence except his attendants, and now and then a kinſman, who lives ſome leagues from this, and will be his heir. This caſtle, in the life time of my Lady, was one of the fineſt and gayeſt places perhaps you

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can conceive; and 'tis a grievous thing to any one who knew it in it's glory, to ſee it now going to rack and ruin for want of a little repair, its courts full of rubbiſh, and its fine old towers mouldering away; but my Lord ſeems pleaſed at beholding its decay."

"Does he never go about the domain?" aſked Madeline.

"No: he generally confines himſelf to a great lonely apartment, where he ſcarcely ſuffers a ray of the bleſſed day-light to enter, and frequently paſſes whole nights within the chapel, where he has cauſed a magnificent monument to be erected to the memory of his lady and ſon."

The converſation into which ſhe had entered caſt an involuntary gloom over the mind of Madeline, and by again depreſſing her ſpirits made her ſoon betray ſymptoms of langour and wearineſs.

The houſekeeper then offered to conduct her to her chamber, an offer which ſhe

gladly accepted, and was accordingly led up a flight of ſtairs, at the end of the paſſage, to a gallery immediately over it; here ſhe found a comfortable room prepared for her.

Too much fatigued to converſe any longer with pleaſure, Madeline would have been pleaſed if her companion had now retired, but the good woman was ſo fond of talking that ſhe declared ſhe would not leave her till ſhe had ſeen her to bed.

Madeline had ſcarcely begun to undreſs when ſhe miſſed her father's picture. Struck with conſternation and regret at its loſs, ſhe threw herſelf on a chair with a countenance ſo full of concern, that the houſekeeper haſtily demanded what was the matter: On being informed, ſhe begged Madeline not to be ſo much diſtreſſed, at leaſt till convinced ſhe could not find it, declaring there was every probability of its being dropped in the hall at the time they were trying to recover her.

Madeline

Madeline inſtantly ſtarted up with an intention of going in queſt of it, but was prevented by the houſekeeper, who aſſured her, that ſhe herſelf would make a diligent ſearch after it. This aſſurance however was not ſufficient to prevent Madeline from wiſhing to join in it, till told that if ſhe went now to the hall, ſhe would run the chance of encountering the Marquis, who always paſſed through it in his way to the chapel, which he frequently viſited at this hour.

As the houſekeeper ſpoke ſomebody tapped at the door; ſhe demanded who it was, and a voice which Madeline immediately recollected to be that of the Marquis's valet, who had ſo politely addreſſed her in the hall, replied,

"'Tis Lafroy. — My Lord preſents his compliments to the young lady, and begs ſhe may have the goodneſs to come to him for a few minutes."

"Lord have mercy upon me! (exclaimed the houſekeeper, with uplifted hands and eyes) what can be the meaning of this?—Why, Lafroy, eagerly opening the door, you have quite aſtoniſhed me!"

The ſurpriſe of Madeline, if poſſible, ſurpaſſed her companions; beſides, with her's was intermingled ſomething like fear.

"Aye, (cried Lafroy, in reply to the houſekeeper) I don't wonder, indeed, Mrs. Beatrice, at your being aſtoniſhed, 'tis quite a marvel to have my Lord deſire to ſee a ſtranger, when he won't permit his own friends to come to him."

"But, pray, Lafroy, did he give no reaſon for deſiring to ſee the young lady?"

"Why as I was lighting him to the chapel which, according to his uſual cuſtom, whenever he finds himſelf in very bad ſpirits, he was going to, he found in the hall a little picture, which he directly concluded muſt belong to the young lady; ſo inſtead of repairing

pairing to the chapel, he immediately returned to his apartment, declaring he muſt himſelf reſtore it to her."

"Dear heart, (cried Mrs. Beatrice) well, I proteſt he is very complaiſant."

'Twas a complaiſance, however, which Madeline would gladly have excuſed, and which ſhe wondered a mind ſo afflicted as his could ever have thought of.

"I never ſaw my Lord more diſturbed than he was juſt after finding the picture, (ſaid Lafroy) I thought when he returned to his apartment he would have fainted."

"Since ſo diſordered 'tis a greater wonder than ever that he ſhould deſire to ſee a ſtranger," cried the houſekeeper.

"Aye, ſo I think too," ſaid Lafroy.

Madeline ſaw he was impatient to conduct her to his Lord, and, though with a reluctance ſhe could ſcarcely conceal, ſhe did not heſitate to accompany him immediately.

He led her through a circuitous gallery to a very magnificent one, as well as ſhe could diſcern by the faint light whiich glimmered through it; at the extreme end of which was the apartment the Marquis ſat in: the moment he introduced her to it he retired, cloſing the door after him.

The Marquis ſat at the head of the room; he bowed without riſing at her entrance, and motioned for her to take a chair on his right hand.

Tremblingly Madeline approached him, and obeyed his motion. It was ſome minutes 'ere he ſpoke, and as his eyes were bent upon the ground the timid ones of Madeline ſurveyed a form which inſpired her with mingled reverence and pity, and which, though bent by age and ſorrow, ſtill retained traces of majeſty and captivating beauty.

"Young lady, (ſaid he, at laſt, raiſing his eyes to hers) I hope you had the goodneſs

to

to excuſe my not doing the honors of my houſe myſelf; affliction, (added he, with a deep ſigh) has long rendered me unable to perform the rites of hoſpitality, to fulfil the claims of ſociety."

"The rites of hoſpitality were ſo amply fulfilled towards me, my Lord, (cried Madeline), that I ſhould deem myſelf highly remiſs if I neglected this opportunity of aſſuring your Lordſhip of my heart-felt gratitude."

"Does this picture, young lady, (ſaid he, diſplaying her father's, which he had hitherto concealed within his hand, and looking earneſtly at her) belong to you?"

"It does my Lord," replied Madeline.

"Will you be ſo obliging (ſaid he, ſtill retaining it) as to inform me how it came into your poſſeſſion?"

The ſtrangeneſs of this queſtion, and the look which accompanied it, threw Madeline into an agitation that made her tremble, and took from her all power of replying.

"You are ſurpriſed at my queſtion, (proceeded he) nor do I wonder at your being ſo, but I truſt you will excuſe it, when I inform you I have important reaſons for it: tell me therefore, I entreat, I conjure you, (he continued, with a vehemence Madeline did not think him capable of) how this picture became your's?"

"My father gave it to me, my Lord," anſwered Madeline.

"Your father!—— Gracious heaven!—He pauſed, as if overcome by ſtrong emotions, but almoſt immediately recovering his voice, his name I entreat!"

"Clermont, my Lord," ſaid Madeline, with increaſing wonder.

"Clermont! (repeated he, with a look ſtrongly expreſſive of diſappointment; then after the ſilence of ſome minutes) do you know by what means he obtained it?"

"It is his own, my Lord," replied Madeline.

"His own! (repeated the Marquis, with a wild and eager look) his own!—All gra-

cious powers!" he aroſe and walked with diſordered ſteps about the room.

Madeline amazed at all ſhe ſaw and heard, remained trembling on her chair.

The Marquis ſuddenly ſtopped before her, and looked at her with an earneſtneſs that made her droop her head.

"Yes, (cried he) I ſee traces in that face of one—which no time can wear from my remembrance."

He reſumed his ſeat.—

"In what manner does your father live?" aſked he.

"He lives in obſcurity, my Lord," replied Madeline.

"What is his family?"

"It conſiſts but of me, my Lord."

"You are acquainted I ſuppoſe with his real name, and the misfortunes which drove him to obſcurity?"

"No, my Lord, I am not; I never knew he had a right to any name but that of Clermont; never knew he had been in a ſituation different from his preſent one."

"Tenderneſs to you made him, I ſuppoſe, conceal his misfortunes," (ſaid the Marquis.) I ſee, (he continued, gazing upon Madeline, whoſe pale countenance was expreſſive of terror as well as agitation) that I have diſturbed you; a curioſity raiſed as your's has been, yet ungratified, is ſufficient indeed to give you uneaſineſs; be ſatisfied, however, by an aſſurance that the preſent myſtery ſhall perhaps, when leaſt expected, be explained."

The too evident uneaſineſs of Madeline however was not ſolely owing to the cauſe he imputed it to. Ignorant of her father's connexions in life, ſhe knew not whether to conſider the Marquis as a friend or foe, and her uncertainty threw her into agony.

"No, my Lord, (ſhe cried, determined if poſſible to terminate her ſuſpence) 'tis not the

the pain of ungratified curiosity that now distresses my mind; tis the fear — she paused, trembled, and bent her eyes to the ground,— 'tis the fear —resumed she in a few minutes, and summoning all her courage to her aid— that my father perhaps may have reason to regret the discovery of his residence."

"Never! (said the Marquis warmly) never will he have reason to regret my discovering it; no, never will he have reason to regret your seeking shelter beneath the roof of Montmorenci Castle. Accept my hand, (continued he, offering it to her) accept it as a pledge of friendship to you and to your father."

Madeline received the proffered pledge with transport, and the Marquis, after gently pressing her hand between his, restored her father's picture.

He now told he would no longer detain her from the rest she appeared so much to require, and expressed his hopes, that 'till perfectly

perfectly recovered from the effects of her late fright and fatigue, she would not quit the castle.

Madeline thanked him for his kind consideration about her, but said she was pretty sure she should be able to re-commence her journey the ensuing day.

The Marquis rung for Lafroy to reconduct her to her chamber, and cautioned her against mentioning the conversation which had passed between them to any one but her father.

Lafroy appeared in a few minutes, and Madeline on returning to her chamber found the housekeeper still there, all amazement and curiosity.

"Well, Mademoiselle, upon my word, (she exclaimed, the moment Madeline entered) you have had a long conversation with my Lord."

"Yes,

"Yes," ſaid Madeline, who ſcarcely knew what ſhe uttered, ſo much was her mind engroſſed by wonder.

"And pray, Mademoiſelle, how do you like him?" aſked the inquiſitive Mrs. Beatrice.

"Very well," replied Madeline, beginning to undreſs in order to get rid of her troubleſome companion.

"Aye, (ſaid Mrs. Beatrice) he is even now ſometimes to be liked; in his youth there could not be a finer gentleman; he was ſo complaiſant, and one of the beſt dancers I ever beheld."

She continued to extol what his Lordſhip had been 'till Madeline was in bed, ſhe then bade her good night, and deſired her, when ſhe choſe to riſe, to ring for a ſervant.

But ſolitude could not calm the agitation of Madeline's mind; the more ſhe reflected on the converſation that had paſſed between her and the Marquis, the more her perplexity

ity increaſed; ſhe at laſt, however, endeavoured to compoſe herſelf by reflecting on the promiſe ſhe had received from him of having the myſtery explained, and his aſſurance of friendſhip to her father.

"Should that friendſhip (ſhe cried) be ſomething more than bare profeſſion; ſhould it have power to mitigate the ſorrows he too viſibly labours under, for ever bleſſed ſhall I conſider the hour in which I entered Montmorenci Caſtle."

Exhauſted by mental as well as bodily fatigue, ſhe at laſt ſunk to repoſe, from which ſhe did not awaken till the morning was far advanced: ſhe was ready to leave her chamber 'ere ſhe rung for a ſervant, a maid immediately obeyed her ſummons, and informed her breakfaſt was already prepared for her by the houſekeeper.

Through a number of winding paſſages Madeline was conducted to the grand ſtaircaſe

caſe, which ſhe deſcended to the hall. Here ſhe involuntarily pauſed to examine the ancient ornaments ſurrounding her, which ſpoke of the ſplendor and and taſte of other days; but with the admiration they excited, was intermingled a degree of ſadneſs at the neglect and even deſolation ſo every where apparent; the ſhields and other war-like trophies which hung upon the ſtately pillars of the hall, were covered with duſt and cobwebs, the fine hiſtorical pictures which ſtretched from the ſide of the ſtaircaſe to the ceiling, were diſcoloured by damp and dropping from the walls; and a great folding door half open, diſcovered the inner court ſtrewed with rubbiſh, and encompaſſed by decaying buildings, before which the high graſs waved in rank luxuriance, unbent by any foot.

'How dreary, how deſolate, (ſaid Madeline to herſelf) is this ſcene; but to this ſtate every work of man ſooner or later comes: who then ſhould vaunt of poſſeſſions, which, like the hand

hand that raiſed them, are doomed to ſwift decay? Like the Poet ſhe ſaid,

"Why doſt thou build the hall, ſon of the winged days? Thou lookeſt from thy towers to-day, yet a few years and the blaſt of the deſert comes; it howls in thy empty court, and whiſtles round thy half worn ſhield."

The voice of Lubin rouſed her from her melancholy meditation. He came to inquire whether ſhe was able to continue her journey that day. She immediately aſſured him ſhe was, and deſired him to have the horſes ready againſt ſhe had breakfaſted.

She was then ſhewn into a parlour adjoining the hall, where ſhe found the houſekeeper waiting at the breakfaſt-table to receive her. Mrs. Beatrice apologiſed for her Lord's not appearing, but ſaid, for many years paſt he had not riſen till the day was far advanced.

Directly

Directly after breakfaſt Madeline bade an adieu to Montmorenci Caſtle; as ſhe did ſo, ſhe requeſted Mrs. Beatrice to preſent her ſincere acknowledgments to the Marquis for the politeneſs and hoſpitality ſhe had received beneath his roof.

Lubin would gladly have chatted as they travelled, but the mind of Madeline was too much agitated to permit her to converſe, and he was forced to amuſe himſelf by whiſtling and ſinging.

The nearer Madeline drew to the habitation of her father, the more her agitation increaſed; all the ſcenes ſhe had gone thro' ſince her ſeparation from him recurred to her memory, and ſhe feared his inquiries concerning them would be too minute; ſhe trembled leſt ſhe ſhould diſcover, notwithſtanding all her precaution, the real ſtate of her heart, diſcover that its affections were abuſed, its pride mortified, its expectations

diſ-

diſappointed; well ſhe knew ſuch a diſcovery would wound him to the ſoul.

"And, Oh! (ſhe cried) to add ſorrow to his ſorrow, to increaſe his miſery already too oppreſſive, would be indeed to aggravate my own."

At the entrance of the valley, in which the cottage of her father ſtood, ſhe alighted and deſired Lubin to lead the horſes after her.

Had her mind been leſs diſturbed than it now was, ſhe would have been enraptured with the lovely proſpect ſhe beheld: it was the autumnal ſeaſon, and the promiſe of the ſpring was amply fulfilled by the luxuriance of the harveſt; the grapes ſhe had left in embrio, were now ripened into purple cluſters, and the toils of the vintage had already commenced; a profuſion of gay flowers enameled the bright ſwerd of the valley, and the yellow mantle of Ceres covered the little vales that interſected many of the hills, and o'er

o'er the waving woods that hung upon thoſe hills ſoft and ſolemn tints were juſt beginning to ſteal.

Madeline reached the valley when the ſun had attained its meridian, an hour when the cattle lay penſively ruminating, and

——————————" The daw,
" The rook and magpie, to the grey-grown oaks
" That the calm village in their verdant arms
" Shelt'ring, embrace, direct their lazy flight;
" Where on the mingling boughs they ſit embower'd
" All the hot noon, 'till cooler hours ariſe:
" Faint, underneath, the houſhold fowls convene;
" And, in a corner of the buzzing ſhade,
" The houſe-dog, with the vacant grey-hound, lie
" Out-ſtretch'd and ſleepy."

"The children of induſtry have had their hopes amply fulfilled, (cried Madeline, as ſhe caſt her eyes around) mine, ſhe ſighed, mine, when I left this place, were, though different, as flattering as their's."

To

To deſcribe her feelings when ſhe came in ſight of her beloved cottage would be impoſſible; they were ſuch as almoſt ſwelled her heart to burſting; pain and pleaſure were ſo intermingled, that it would have been hard to determine which was moſt predominant. Her pleaſure at the idea of beholding her father was damped by reflecting in how very different a manner ſhe once expected to have returned to him. She ſtopped at the little gate which opened into the grove, and leaned upon it, in order to try and gain ſome compoſure 'ere ſhe ſhould appear before him: old Bijou, the houſe dog, who lay ſlumbering beſide it, woke at her approach, and inſtantly ſet up a cry of joy, which denoted his perfect recollection of her; as ſhe patted his head, ſhe endeavoured to quiet him, but without effect: the noiſe he made diſturbed Jaqueline at her work, and excited her curioſity.

"What is the matter, you noiſy rogue? (ſaid

(ſaid ſhe, coming from the cottage) what poſſeſſes you, Bijou, to keep ſuch a barking?"

She approached the gate, ſtopped, ſcreamed, and retreated—then again advanced—again retreated: at laſt ſhe exclaimed

"If you do not wiſh to deprive me of my ſenſes, you will at once tell me whether or not you are Mademoiſelle Madeline?"

"Do you doubt your eyes," cried Madeline, ſtretching our her hand.

Jaqueline inſtantly pulled open the gate, but inſtead of taking the proffered hand of Madeline, ſhe claſped her arms about her, and for ſome minutes by her careſſes prevented her from ſpeaking.

"Is my father well?" at laſt aſked Madeline, diſengaging herſelf from the enraptured Jaqueline.

"Yes, Mademoiſelle, very well; but how did you travel?—Bleſs me, looking over the

gate, and perceiving Lubin with the horſes) ſurely you did not ride?"

"Is my father within?" aſked Madeline, not attending to this queſtion.

"No, he is in the vineyard; I will run and inform him of your arrival."

"Do not be too precipitate, (ſaid Madeline) break it to him by degrees for he does not expect me."

To practiſe any caution, however, was totally out of the power of Jaqueline; ſhe flew to the vineyard; and Madeline all the way heard her exclaiming,

"She is come, ſhe is come— O, Monſieur, Mademoiſelle Madeline is come."

Madeline entered the parlour, ſhe ſat down, and tried to compoſe herſelf againſt the approaching interview; but ſhe tried in vain. In a few minutes ſhe heard the voice of her father; her heart throbbed as if it would burſt her boſom: ſhe roſe, but had not power to meet him. Pale, diſordered he

he ruſhed into the room, and Madeline ſunk almoſt fainting into his extended arms.

It was ſome time 'ere either of them could ſpeak. Clermont at laſt raiſed his eyes,

"Do I again behold you, my child, my Madeline, (he exclaimed) welcome, thrice welcome to my arms."

He held her to a diſtance from him; he gazed upon her; the alteration in her looks ſeemed to ſtrike him to the very heart: the roſe that had bloomed upon her cheek when they parted,—the luſtre that had brightened her eye was fled, and ſadneſs had taken entire poſſeſſion of her.

"Oh! my child, (ſaid he, looking mournfully at her) I fear, I fear, you have too bitterly lamented the death of our ineſtimable friend."

Madeline burſt into tears.

"Our loſs (reſumed Clermont) is great indeed, but our grief is ſelfiſh: death to her was a removal to unutterable felicity; ſtem therefore theſe ſtrong emotions in pity to me, check them, remember you are my only earthly conſolation, the only prop I have to reſt on."

"Alas! (ſighed Madeline) how frail a prop!" She took his hand, ſhe preſſed it to her lips. "My father (ſhe ſaid) be aſſured no effort on my part ſhall be wanting to fulfil your expectations, and heaven I doubt not will ſtrengthen the feeble hands and calm the agitated mind of her who prays to it for fortitude and compoſure to be enabled to perform its incumbent duties."

"Yes, my child, (cried Clermont embracing her) heaven always aſſiſts the virtuous."

He now inquired to what circumſtance he owed her unexpected return, as in her laſt letter ſhe had given no intimation of it. Madeline, without entering into the particulars of

of her late ſituation at the chateau, briefly informed him, that as ſoon as Monſieur D' Alembert came to it, Madame D'Alembert wiſhed her to leave it, and had promiſed in a few days to aſſign her reaſon for that wiſh.

Clermont was all aſtoniſhment; but as he could not poſſibly fathom the myſtery, he endeavoured to turn his thoughts from it. Madeline was ſtill too much agitated to be able to inform him of her adventures at Montmorenci caſtle, but ſhe determined to devote the firſt minutes of returning compoſure to that purpoſe, deeming it highly neceſſary for him to be acquainted with them as ſoon as poſſible.

Her mind was a little relieved from the uneaſineſs that oppreſſed it by finding him ſilent reſpecting de Sevignie; yet while ſhe rejoiced ſhe wondered at that ſilence till ſhe reflected that the Counteſs had promiſed never to acquaint him with the renewed attentions of de Sevignie, except they were

terminated in a manner that ſhe knew muſt be pleaſing to him.

But though the Counteſs had kept her promiſe, though Clermont was ſilent reſpecting de Sevignie, his mind was occupied in thinking of him; he could not believe that the deep dejection of his daughter was owing ſolely to the death of her friend, as his words, from regard to her delicay had intimated: to the diſappointment of her hopes relative to de Sevignie he was convinced it was principally owing, and with anguiſh intolerable he looked upon this drooping bloſſom, whoſe fair promiſe of maturity ſeemed now utterly at an end.

"But a few days ago, (he cried to himſelf) and, from the recollection of former calamities, I thought I could not be more wretched than I then was: but, alas! I now find I was miſtaken—now, when I behold the ſole ſolace of affliction, my only earthly hope, ſinking beneath a grief which ſeems bending

bending her gentle head to ſwift decay. Oh! gracious heaven, if my child is deſtined to an early grave, cloſe theſe ſad eyes 'ere that deſtiny be accompliſhed."

He wiſhed to have the ſorrows of her heart acknowledged to him; the acknowledgment would give him a right to offer his ſympathy and counſel: and the ſympathy, the counſel of a parent, might perhaps, he thought, be efficacious. But though he wiſhed ſuch a divulgement, he would not deſire it, well knowing the delicacy of the female mind, and how unwillingly it muſt confeſs a hopeleſs paſſion.

CHAP. IV.

" Ah! happy grove, dark and ſecure retreat
" Of ſacred ſilence, reſt's eternal ſeat;
" How well your cool and unfrequented ſhade
" Suits with the chaſte retirement of a maid:
" Oh if kind heaven had been ſo much my friend,
" To make my fate upon my choice depend;
" All my ambition I would here confine,
" And only this elyſium ſhould be mine."

CLERMONT went out to ſee that Lubin was taken care of, thank him for the attention he had paid to Madeline, and inquire whether he would not ſtop a day or two at the cottage to reſt himſelf; but Lubin ſaid there was a neceſſity for his immediate return

turn to the chateau, and that after dinner he muſt depart: he accordingly ſet out at the time he had fixed, and as he quitted the cottage received the grateful acknowledgments of Madeline for his care of her, and an entreaty that he would remind his lady of the promiſe ſhe had given of writing ſoon.

Madeline, now more compoſed, no longer delayed acquainting her father of her viſit to Montmorenci Caſtle. The inſtant ſhe mentioned it he ſtarted, and betrayed the greateſt emotion, but when ſhe proceeded, when ſhe informed him of her being ſummoned to the preſence of the Marquis, of the inquiries he had made concerning the picture, he ſuddenly exclaimed with uplifted hands and eyes,

"Oh! Providence, how myſterious are thy ways!"

"The Marquis (ſaid Madeline, obeying the motion which her father made for her to proceed) the Marquis promiſed that when

leaſt expected perhaps the myſtery ſhould be explained.—"

She pauſed, for at this moment ſhe heard the trampling of horſes feet—ſhe looked towards the window and ſaw a man alighting at the gate, whom ſhe immediately recollected to have ſeen at Montmorenci Caſtle.

" 'Tis a meſſenger from the Marquis," cried Madeline, ſinking back in her chair. Her father ſtarted up, and ruſhed from the room; he met the man at the entrance of the cottage, and Madeline heard them talking together for a few minutes, they then repaired to the ſtudy, the door of which was directly bolted, and Madeline remained two hours by herſelf in a ſituation that can be better conceived than deſcribed—her father then returned to the parlour pale, trembling, diſordered;—he entered it, he ſpoke not to Madeline—he ſeemed to have no power to ſpeak—but he put an open letter into her hand. With an agitation that ſhook her whole frame

frame ſhe caſt her eyes over it, and read as follows.

"The ſigh of repentance has at length prevailed—heaven has given me an opportunity of making ſome atonement for the injuſtice I committed in my youth:—

"Come then, ſon of a much injured and unhappy love, come to your rightful home, to the arms of your father—

"The lamp of life but feebly lights his eyes; haſten then, while he has power to ſee—to bleſs you he would add—but that he is unworthy of beſtowing a bleſſing.

"Haſten, that he may ſink to his grave with ſome degree of peace, at beholding his rightful heir acknowledged; at beholding an heir better calculated than himſelf for ſupporting the honors of

MONTMORENCI."

The variety of emotions that aſſailed the heart of Madeline on peruſing this letter prevented all utterance, and ſhe ſtood gazing on her father, the very image of aſtoniſhment.

"Yes, (ſaid Clermont, at laſt, in a ſolemn voice), I am the ſon of a much injured and unhappy woman, the rightful though long unacknowledged heir of Montmorenci; called to a ſituation I was always entitled to, when too late for that ſituation to afford me any pleaſure. - So much am I attached to my preſent retirement, ſo congenial is it to my feelings, that nothing but reſpect to the memory of my mother, regard to the intereſt of my child, could tempt me to forego it."

"Heaven can witneſs for me, (cried Madeline) how little I deſire you to leave it on my account. Oh! my father, no wealth, however great, no rank however exalted, can now confer happineſs upon me."

"My

"My child (exclaimed Clermont, claſping his arms round her) do not torture my ſoul by expreſſions which intimate ſuch deſpondence. Oh, try to alleviate my miſery, a miſery which no time, no circumſtance can baniſh from my mind, by letting me think that you will be happy,—by letting me think that the approaching change of ſituation will at leaſt promote your felicity."

"I will try, my father, (ſaid Madeline) I will try to be all you wiſh me."

"I have no longer any reaſon to conceal my former ſituation,(ſaid Clermont) to-morrow therefore in our way to the Caſtle of Montmorenci, I ſhall relate a long and affecting ſtory to you."

"To-morrow! (cried Madeline, gaſping for breath) to-morrow do we go to Montmorenci Caſtle?"

"Yes, (replied Clermont) the ſervant who brought me the letter from his Lord and has juſt departed, informed me that a carriage would be here early in the morning, to convey us thither; to-morrow therefore I bid adieu

adieu to this cottage, in which I imagined my laſt ſigh would have been breathed; to thoſe ſhadowy woods which ſcreened me from an invidious world; to thoſe lonely ſhades which heard the voice of my complaining."

Madeline was not leſs affected than her father at the idea of quitting their retirement; the gaiety, the hopes, that would once have rendered her delighted with the proſpect that now opened to her view, were fled, never, never ſhe believed, to be revived.

Her father told her he meant merely to inform Jaqueline that they were going on a viſit to a friend, but as ſoon as they were ſettled in Montmorenci Caſtle he intended to write to her and put her in poſſeſſion of the cottage as a reward for her long and faithful ſervices.

The preparations for their journey were made before they retired to reſt; Madeline,

at

at the time ſhe accompanied the Counteſs de Merville had fortunately left ſome cloaths behind, and theſe were now packed up for her.

In the ſolitude of her little chamber ſhe gave vent to thoſe feelings which tenderneſs for her father made her ſuppreſs in his preſence.

"Alas! (ſhe cried) are my hopes always to be diſappointed?—muſt I reſign the tranquillity of this cottage?—muſt I again launch into a world where I experienced little elſe than diſtreſs and danger?—Oh! ſcenes dear and congenial to my ſoul! (ſhe exclaimed, as from a window ſhe viewed the valley, now illumined by a bright moon), Oh! ſcenes dear and congenial to my ſoul, had I never left you I had never known the reality of falſhood, never been truly unhappy.

"I am now (ſhe continued) about entering into a ſituation, which from diſappointed hope I am incapable of enjoying; a ſituation

which will give the world claims upon me, that from the ſadneſs of my mind I ſhall be if not unable, at leaſt totally unwilling to fulfil; far better, far happier than for me to remain in an obſcurity, where, without ſtrictures from others, or cenſures from myſelf, I might act as inclination prompted.

"But what do I ſay? (cried ſhe, after a pauſe) do I repine at a change which reſtores my father to the rank he has been ſo long unjuſtly deprived of; at a change which will give to me the means of diſpenſing happineſs to others. Oh! let me chace from my breaſt a grief ſo ſelfiſh, let me not wrap myſelf in ſorrow and deſpair, and becauſe the bleſſing I deſired is not mine reject every other. Let me not, like a froward child, daſh the proffered cup of joy from my lips, becauſe there is not in it every ingredient I could wiſh. Yes, (ſhe proceeded, as if animated by a new ſpirit), I will try to diſpel a grief that enervates, that ſinks me into langour, that makes me ſhrink from the idea of fulfilling the claims of ſociety; and I make no

doubt

doubt my efforts will be ſucceſsful, for heaven ſtrengthens thoſe who wiſh to do right, and I ſhall be again, if not happy, at leaſt tranquil; the felicity I ſhall have the means of beſtowing on others, will ſoothe my feelings; the tears I wipe from the cheek of miſery will diſſipate my own, and the ſigh I ſuppreſs in the boſom of affliction will prevent mine from riſing."

The entrance of Jaqueline now diſturbed her, ſhe came to make thoſe inquiries which the preſence of Clermont had hitherto prevented.

"Dear Mademoiſelle, (ſaid ſhe, ſitting down by the little toilette as Madeline began to undreſs) what in the name of wonder occaſioned your coming home in the ſudden manner you did?"

"Nothing that can afford you any pleaſure to hear, (replied Madeline) I therefore requeſt you may aſk no more queſtions about it."

"Lord

"Lord, Mademoiſelle, 'tis very natural to inquire about what has ſurpriſed one ſo much. Well, if you had taken my advice, you would never have gone with the Counteſs—I knew very well how ſhe would ſerve you; I knew there was no dependance to be placed upon the promiſes of the great, and you find I was not wrong in thinking or ſaying ſo: you ſee after promiſing you ſo fine a fortune, how ſhe has popped off without leaving you ſo much as a ſous."

"You hurt me extremely by talking in this way, (ſaid Madeline) I beg you may never ſpeak again in ſuch a manner of a perſon who was my beſt friend, and whoſe ſudden death alone prevented her fulfilling her generous intentions towards me."

"Ah! Mademoiſelle, you are a good ſoul, and willing to excuſe every one; but people will have their own thoughts let you ſay what you will. One looks ſo fooliſh now, (ſhe continued) for my chief conſolation during your abſence was telling the neighbours of the fine ſituation you had got into for life. 'She has been taken (ſays I) to one

one of the fineſt caſtles in Dauphine, and from thence ſhe is to be carried to Paris, where, no doubt, ſhe will get a grand match as the lady, her friend, intends to give her a very large fortune; and as ſoon as ſhe is ſettled in a houſe of her own, I am to be ſent for, either to be her own woman, or houſekeeper, 'twill be at my own option which."

"And pray, Jaqueline, how came you to ſay ſuch things, when you foreſaw, as you yourſelf acknowledge that I ſhould be diſappointed by the Counteſs?"

Jaqueline looked confuſed—

"Why, Mademoiſelle, (ſaid ſhe, after the heſitation of a minute) I was ſometimes inclined to think that ſhe might be as good as her word."

"Well, Jaqueline, let this be a caution to you never again to mention expectations which you are not pretty ſure of having fulfilled."

"Aye, Mademoiſelle, we all grow wiſer every day."

She

She now expreſſed her regret at the intended departure of Clermont and Madeline, and endeavoured to diſcover whither they were going; but Madeline evaded her queſtions, and when nearly undreſt diſmiſſed her, highly mortified at not having had her curioſity gratified.

Madeline's mind was too much agitated to permit her to reſt, and though ſhe went to bed, ſhe paſſed a reſtleſs night; towards the dawn of day ſhe ſunk into a ſlumber, from which however ſhe was ſoon diſturbed by Jaqueline, who came to tell her the carriage waited. She ſtarted up and haſtily began to dreſs.

"Do pray, dear Mademoiſelle, (ſaid Jaqueline) do pray come to the window and look at the carriage, I dare ſay you never ſaw ſo fine a one; 'tis ſo beautifully ornamented, and drawn by ſix horſes, and there are four out-riders and three poſtillions: dear me, it muſt be a charming thing to ride in it!

it! I dare ſay it belongs to a very great man, I ſhould certainly have inquired from the ſervants, but that my maſter told me he would be very angry if I aſked them any queſtions."

"Tell my father, (ſaid Madeline) I ſhall be with him very ſoon."

"Yes, Mademoiſelle, (replied Jaquline) and by the time you come down the coffee will be made."

Madeline was ſoon dreſſed and deſcended the ſtairs; but inſtead of going directly to the parlour, ſhe ſtole into the garden, to take a laſt leave of

"The native bowers of innocence and eaſe,
"Seats of her youth when ev'ry charm could pleaſe."

Scarcely a ſpot within the garden but what recalled ſome happy, ſome delightful hour to her mind; ſuch hours as ſhe never more expected to experience.

O'er the trees beneath whoſe ſhelter ſhe had ſo often ſported in childiſh gaiety, ſo

often enjoyed a delightful retreat from the meridian ſun; o'er the flowers which ſhe had planted, and with her pencil ſo often amuſed herſelf by copying, ſhe could now with difficulty prevent herſelf from weeping, and like the poet ſhe exclaimed,

"Farewel, ye flow'rs, whoſe buds, with early care,
"I watch'd, and to the chearful ſun did rear;
"Who now ſhall bind your ſtems, or, when you fall,
"With fountain ſtreams your fainting ſouls recall."

"No more, my goats, ſhall I behold you climb,
"The ſteepy cliffs, or crop the flowery thyme;
"No more extended in the grot below,
"Shall ſee you browzing on the mountain's brow;
"The prickly ſhrubs, and after on the bare,
"Lean down the deep abyſs and hang in air."

A deep ſigh from a little bower near her ſtartled Madeline: ſhe looked towards it, and beheld her father: he came out and taking her hand, led her into the houſe.

Breakfaſt was ready, they took ſome coffee and then roſe to depart; Jaqueline cried bitterly

bitterly, but Clermont comforted her by an aſſurance of writing ſoon, and informing her where he was; he alſo deſired her to chuſe ſome neighbour for a companion: with a trembling hand he aſſiſted his daughter into the coach, which ſet off the moment he had entered it. The deepeſt melancholy appeared to have taken poſſeſſion of both, and both for a conſiderable time obſerved a profound ſilence."

CHAP

CHAP. V.

"A parent's ſoft ſorrows to mine led the way."

CLERMONT at laſt addreſſed Madeline.

"I ſhall now, my love, (ſaid he) fulfil my promiſe, and relate thoſe events which tenderneſs made me hitherto conceal from you.

"In the chateau, where you enjoyed the ſociety of one of the moſt amiable of women, the early and the moſt happy part of my life

life was paſſed under the protection of Count de Valdore, father to your lamented Benefactreſs; I underſtood that I was the orphan ſon of a very particular friend of his, who, though of a reſpectable family, was unable to leave me any proviſion, and had in his laſt moments recommended me to the protection of the Count. Had I been in reality the ſon of the Count, he could not have paid me greater attention than he did; neither he nor the Counteſs made any diſtinction between me and their only child Elvira, with whom, her age being nearly the ſame of mine, I was educated; the moſt eminent maſters in every branch of literature, and every elegant accompliſhment, attending us conſtantly at the chateau.

"Naturally of a gay diſpoſition, and ſurrounded by every thing which could add to that gaiety, I baſked in the ſun-ſhine, nor thought of any clouds that might hereafter obſcure its brightneſs: indeed I had nothing to apprehend, for the Count had always promiſed me

an ample proviſion. Alas! the happineſs I then enjoyed but rendered the miſery I afterwards experienced more acute; for recollected joys always ſharpen the arrows of affliction.

"The firſt interruption my happineſs received was by the death of the Counteſs, which happened when I was about eighteen; the grief I felt for her loſs was ſuch as an affectionate ſon muſt have felt for a tender mother, but, though poignant, it was faint to that experienced by the Count; nobly, however, he tried to check his own feelings, in order to appeaſe thoſe of his daughter and mine: his efforts in time ſucceeded; but, alas! ſcarcely were we beginning to regain ſome degree of tranquillity ere he was taken from us to that bleſſedneſs his whole life proved him deſerving of. Smothered grief undermined his conſtitution, and in three months after the death of his lady he was re-united to her in thoſe regions where they could never more be ſeparated.

"When

"When he felt his laſt moments approaching, he diſmiſſed every one but me and Elvira from his room; we knelt on each ſide of the bed, and, in the moſt affecting language, he conjured us to ſubmit, without repining, to the divine will; after he had beſtowed a ſolemn and tender benediction upon his daughter, ſuch as her filial piety deſerved, he turned to me and took my hand:

'My dear Lauſane, (ſaid he, for ſo I was called) I ſhould have died unhappy if I had not had an opportunity of thanking you for the reſpect, the attention you ever paid to me and mine.'

"I would have ſpoken, I would have told him how inadequate that reſpect, that attention was to the care, the affection I had experienced from him and his family, but the fullneſs of my heart prevented utterance.

"Had heaven ſpared my life (continued he) a little longer, I ſhould have diſcloſed to you a moſt important ſecret; it was decreed however that from me you ſhould never hear it; but in a ſmall India box, in my cabinet,

you will find a packet addreſſed to you, and containing all the particulars I would have informed you of: when you read them, you will find that without knowing misfortune you have been moſt unfortunate; that without feeling injury, you have been moſt injured; but as you hope for proſperity in this world, endleſs happineſs in that to come, I entreat you never raſhly to reſent thoſe misfortunes, or endeavour to revenge thoſe injuries. Should the author of both ſtill withhold that juſtice you are entitled to, you will not find yourſelf under any neceſſity of accepting his bounty, which in ſuch a caſe would be degrading to you, as in my will, which will be opened as ſoon as M. Valdore, my daughter's guardian arrives at the chateau, I have made ſuch proviſion for you as will enable you to hold the ſame place in ſociety you have hitherto done.'

"I cannot deſcribe the feelings excited by the words of the Count: aſtoniſhment overwhelmed my ſenſes, and I would not long

long have delayed to ſeek an explanation of them, had he not died almoſt immediately after he had ceaſed ſpeaking.

"The confuſion of the family, the grief of his daughter, who would only liſten to conſolation from me, and my own affliction then deadened my curioſity, and his interment had taken place ere I thought of viſiting the cabinet; nor perhaps ſhould I have done ſo as ſoon as I did, had I not found myſelf, the very evening after his funeral, ſeated with Elvira in the room where it ſtood. We were alone; for her guardian, who lived in a remote part of the kingdom, was not yet arrived. The moment I beheld the cabinet my curioſity was revived, and I eagerly wiſhed to take from it the important papers; the eyes of Elvira followed mine, and the words of her father inſtantly recurred to her recollection.

'My dear Lauſane, (ſaid ſhe) I am confident you muſt have ſuffered much from the ſuſpenſion of your curioſity; delay no longer to gratify it—it may be requiſite for

you to be immediately acquainted with the ſecret my father ſpoke of; I will retire to give you a proper opportunity of peruſing the packet.'

"No, Elvira, (I replied, taking her hand as ſhe roſe to withdraw), you have hitherto honored me with the appellation of brother, and heaven can witneſs for me I bear you the affection of one; a brother ſhould have no ſecrets from an affectionate ſiſter; ſince you therefore permit me to conſider you as one, condeſcend to hear the myſterious words of your father explained; they have prepared me for a tale of diſtreſs, and if any thing can alleviate the ſorrow it may perhaps excite, it can only be the gentle ſympathy of ſuch a friend as you are.

"She re-ſeated herſelf, and tremblingly I approached and unlocked the cabinet: the firſt thing I beheld within it was the India box. I took it out, I drew back the lid, and beheld a large ſealed packet, directed in the hand-writing of the Count to me. I felt my whole

whole frame agitated, and could ſcarcely reach the ſofa on which Elvira ſat.

"Many minutes elapſed ere I could ſummon ſufficient reſolution to break the ſeal. I felt as if about to raiſe a veil which had hitherto concealed terrific images from my view, and ſhuddered at the idea of the horrors they might excite; at length I ventured to do ſo, and found ſeveral ſheets of ſmall paper within the envelope, all cloſely written, and in a hand entirely new to me. Elvira leant over my ſhoulder, and together we began to peruſe the following ſtory."

Here Clermont pauſed; and, taking a manuſcript from his pocket, he put it into the hand of his daughter, and deſired her to read it to herſelf,

"When you have finiſhed it, (ſaid he) I will go on with my narrative."

Madeline bowed, and read as follows:

"Ere thoſe pages meet your eye, the hand that wrote them will be crumbled into duſt. Oh! my ſon, offspring of an unhappy and ill-requited love, long before you peruſe them, every trace, every memorial of your unfortunate mother will be obliterated from your mind, nor will all your efforts be able to recall to recollection the period in which her bitter tears bedewed your innocent cheek, in which with happy playfulneſs you hid your head in her diſtracted boſom: — but I run into complaints ere I aſſign the ſad occaſion of them—I will, if poſſible, be brief.

"Ere I was born, love, unhappy love, I may ſay, laid in ſome degree the foundation of my miſery. My mother, the daughter of Count St. Paul, whoſe family is well known for its antiquity and pride in the Province of Normandy; untinctured either by the ambition or avarice of her parents, ſelected for herſelf at an early age a partner whoſe only portion was merit, and thus diſappointed the expectations which her birth, beauty, and accompliſhments

accompliſhments had raiſed in her family; in conſequence of doing ſo ſhe was utterly diſcarded by every member of it, her youngeſt brother excepted, who had then however nothing to beſtow but—aſſurances of friendſhip.

"St. Foix, the deſcendant of a noble but reduced family, to whom ſhe had united herſelf, was in the army, and with him ſhe launched into the world, whoſe ſtorms and diſtreſſes ſhe had hitherto known only by report; too ſoon, alas! ſhe had a ſad experience of them.

"But with a noble fortitude ſhe ſuſtained them, not only from tenderneſs to her huſband, but from a conſciouſneſs of having drawn them upon herſelf. St. Foix, however, the delirium of paſſion over, and the preſſure of diſtreſs experienced, bitterly regretted having yielded to an affection which heightened his cares, by involving the woman he adored in ſorrow, and in little more than two years after his marriage, and a few months after my birth, he fell a victim to his feelings. The grief of my mother may be

imagined, but cannot be deſcribed, and in all probability ſhe would ſoon have ſunk beneath it, had not her brother flown to her relief: an union juſt then completed with an heireſs of conſiderable fortune, gave him the power of ſerving her as he wiſhed, and he endeavoured to calm her ſorrows by aſſurances of being a never-failing friend to her, and of ſupplying to me, to the utmoſt of his power, the place of the parent I was ſo early deprived of. He immediately took a ſmall cottage, in a ſequeſtered and romantic part of Dauphine, for her, and ſettled upon her a yearly ſtipend, amply ſufficient to procure her all that ſhe could want or deſire in retirement.

"Time and religion ſoftened her anguiſh, and as I grew up, her heart again began to be ſenſible of pleaſure; a pleaſure, however, frequently embittered by a conviction of the unhappineſs her brother experienced in conſequence of ſerving her; for his wife, ſelfiſh and illiberal in her diſpoſition, could not with any degree of patience bear the idea of his regarding any one out of his own immediate family,

family, or of his expending on them any part of that fortune ſhe ſo frequently boaſted of having given to him.

"Long he withſtood her ſolicitations to withdraw his bounty, long oppoſed her inclination; but at length, tired of domeſtic ſtrife, of continual upbraidings for the intention he avowed of providing for his niece in a manner ſuitable to her birth, he hinted a wiſh to my mother for my retiring into a convent.

"This was an unexpected blow, and one which overwhelmed my mother, by deſtroying thoſe hopes that, with the natural vanity and partiality of a parent, almoſt from my birth ſhe had indulged, of ſeeing me at ſome period or other happily ſettled, and of enjoying beneath my roof that tranquillity which ſorrow and dependance had hitherto prevented her from experiencing.

"With tears, with agonies which ſhook her frame, ſhe conjured him not to deprive her of her only earthly comfort, not to entomb her child alive, or in one ſhort minute undo all he had hitherto done.

"Ah! my mother, well had it been for your Madeline, if your lips had never uttered ſuch a ſupplication; well had it been for her, if in the firſt bloom of life, ere her heart was ſufficiently expanded to feel that tenderneſs which conſtitutes our greateſt happineſs or miſery, the walls of a convent had immured her from a world, where her peace, her fame, were deſtined to be wrecked.

"My uncle was too generous to repeat a wiſh which gave ſuch pain; he regretted ever having mentioned it, and ſtrove to make amends for having done ſo, by reiterating the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of fulfilling the intentions he had before avowed towards me.

"Thus was the ſtorm which threatened the peace of my mother, overblown; but, alas! the calm that ſucceeded it was to me of ſhort duration. I had ſcarcely attained my ſixteenth year when I was deprived of this ineſtimable parent. In the language of deſpair I wrote to my uncle, then at Paris, to inform him of this event; and at the ſame time encloſed a letter, written by my mother in her laſt hours, and, which I afterwards found contained a ſupplication not to permit

me

me to enter a convent without I wiſhed myſelf to do ſo, and an entreaty for his protection to be continued to me.

"He directly haſtened to me, and uſed every method in his power to ſooth my ſorrows; he repeated his aſſurances of continued kindneſs, and declared from that period I ſhould reſide with him till I had a proper habitation of my own to go to.

"I accordingly accompanied him to Paris; and here, in all probability, the ſadneſs of my heart might ſoon have been diverted by the novelty of every thing I ſaw, had I met with any of that tenderneſs I had always been accuſtomed to; but the moſt chilling coldneſs, or elſe the moſt contemptuous diſdain, was the treatment I received from my aunt and her family. My uncle, in order to try and prevent my mind from dwelling on it, inſiſted on my being taken to all the places they frequented; but this, inſtead of alleviating, rather aggravated my miſery, for my aunt ſoon took it into her head that I was a rival to her daughters. A year I dragged on in a ſtate of wretchedneſs, which no language could

could juſtly expreſs: at the expiration of that period, worn out with ill treatment, and agonized by beholding my benevolent protector in continual diſquietude on my account, I determined, with a kind of deſperate reſolution, to terminate that diſquietude and my indignities, by retiring to a cloiſter: but how impoſſible is it to expreſs the pangs with which I formed and announced this reſolution: yet what, you will ſay, could have occaſioned thoſe pangs? ſurely not the idea of renouncing a world which contained no tender friend to ſupply the place of the one I had loſt?—

"Alas! it then contained a being dearer to me than life itſelf:—St. Julian, the Marquis of Montmorenci's ſon, viſited at my uncle's, and had not long been known ere he was beloved! Thoſe who knew him could not have wondered at my ſudden attachment; every virtue, every grace which ennobles and adorns humanity he appeared to poſſeſs. Oh! St. Julian, Heaven ſurely endowed you with every virtue; for candour

and

and benevolence ſat upon your countenance, and it was only an improper education, or pernicious company that rendered you deceitful, and led you to betray the unſuſpicious heart, which repoſed upon you for happineſs.

"Secretly I indulged my paſſion, yet without the ſmalleſt hope of having it returned; for though a ſoft beam from the eye of St. Julian ſometimes tempted me to think I was not utterly indifferent to him, I never had reaſon to imagine he thought ſeriouſly about me; but, notwithſtanding my hopeleſſneſs reſpecting him, ſo great, ſo exquiſite was the pleaſure I derived from ſeeing, from liſtening to him, that the idea of foregoing it was infinitely more painful to me than that of death.

"My uncle heard my determination of retiring to a cloiſter with a ſatisfaction which he could not diſguiſe, though he attempted it; and my aunt and her children with evident delight: generous to the laſt, my uncle

uncle left me free to chuſe a convent—I accordingly fixed on one, with which I was well acquainted, near the habitation where alone I had been happy.

"Immediate preparations were made for my removal, and in a few days after I had avowed my intention of quitting it, I was hurried from my uncle's houſe.

"Accompanied by an old female domeſtic, I commenced my journey; what I ſuffered on doing ſo I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe. I felt like a wretch going into a gloomy exile, where the features, the voice he loved, would never more charm his eye, or ſooth his ear.

"At a late hour we ſtopped for the night. As ſoon as my companion had retired to her chamber, I locked myſelf up in mine, and gave way to the agonies of my ſoul. In the midſt of my lamentations I was ſtartled by a tap at the chamber-door; I liſtened attentively, and heard it repeated, and at the ſame time my name pronounced in a low voice. Still more ſurpriſed, I haſtily unlocked the

door, and beheld — ah! gracious Heaven! what were the feelings of that moment, St. Julian!—I involuntarily receded, and ſunk half fainting upon a chair. The words, the tenderneſs of St. Julian ſoon revived me, and brought me to a perfect ſenſe of my happineſs; he implored my pardon for the agitation he had cauſed me.

"He had loved me, he declared, almoſt from the firſt moment he beheld me, and would at once have divulged his paſſion, had he not feared its being then diſcovered to my aunt, whoſe malice he knew would betray him to his father; he had therefore determined, if he beheld no chance of loſing me, to conceal it till the expectations he entertained of a ſplendid independence at the death of a very old relative were realized, and he conſequently ſecured from ſuffering any pecuniary diſtreſs through the diſpleaſure of his father, which he could not deny his thinking would follow the diſcloſure of our union.

"My

"My ſudden reſolution, (he proceeded to ſay) had been concealed from him till I had quitted my uncle's; with difficulty on hearing it he could hide his emotions, and almoſt inſtantly purſued me, trembling leſt I ſhould be loſt to him for ever.

"He now implored me to conſent to a private union, and put myſelf immediately under his protection, ſolemnly aſſuring me, that the moment he could acknowledge me as his wife, without involving me in diſtreſs, with equal pride and pleaſure he would do ſo.

"You may well believe I did not, could not reſiſt his ſupplications:—a carriage and confidential ſervants were in waiting, and we directly ſet out for Paris, which we reached at the dawn of day, and, ſtopping at the firſt church we came to, were united.

"St. Julian then took lodgings for me in a retired part of the town, under a feigned name, paſſing himſelf for a ſecretary to a man of conſequence, and unable, from his ſituation, to be always with me.

"I

"I had now no drawback on my felicity but that which proceeded from ſorrow at my mother's not being alive to witneſs it, and uneaſineſs at the diſquiet, which I learned from St. Julian, who ſtill continued to viſit at his houſe, my uncle felt on my account, not being able to form the ſlighteſt conjecture of what had become of me: Perfect happineſs, however, I knew was unattainable in this world, and as the beſt proof of my gratitude to Heaven for that portion which I enjoyed, I ſedulouſly endeavoured to repel the ſigh of regret that ſometimes involuntarily heaved my boſom.

"Before the expiration of a year you were born. Oh! with what rapture did I receive you to my arms! with what delight did I preſent you to your father! and, with mingled emotions of tenderneſs and pleaſure, beheld the tear which ſtole down his cheek, as I endeavoured in your infant features to diſcover a reſemblance to his.

"I

"I had now attained my ſummit of felicity; and my ſun was ſoon to ſet in miſery and deſpair.

"Soon after your birth, the viſits of your father became leſs frequent; he did not aſſign any reaſon for their being ſo, nor did I inquire; for ſuſpicion was a ſtranger to my breaſt; my faith was unbounded, great, and firm as my love; and while I wept his abſence, I ever hailed his preſence with a ſmile.

"At length a long ſpace enſued in which I did not behold him; my ſpirits involuntarily drooped, and with them my health declined; yet, notwithſtanding my ſufferings, the moment I again ſaw him, I thought myſelf amply rewarded for them.

"The pleaſure, however, which filled my heart on his entering my chamber, was quickly damped by the coldneſs of his manner: he ſcarcely returned my careſſes, or noticed you.

'Well,

'Well, Madeline, (ſaid he, ſeating himſelf at a diſtance from me), I truſt you have been well and happy ſince I laſt ſaw you.'

"As well and happy (I replied, looking at him with that tenderneſs which my heart experienced) as I could be without the ſociety which conſtitutes my chief felicity."

'Ah! Madeline, (cried he) I truſt when you mix more in the world, you will be able to enjoy felicity without that ſociety.'

"Could the world (ſaid I) produce any change in my preſent ſentiments, I ſhould wiſh for ever to be ſecluded from it."

"He aroſe and approached me.

'I came, Madeline, (ſaid he) with a hope of receiving proofs of your good ſenſe inſtead of your tenderneſs; do not interrupt me, (continued he, ſeeing me about to ſpeak) liſten attentively to what I am about ſaying:

'All hopes of an independence are terminated by my uncle, who died ſome days ago, bequeathing the whole of his property to a religious houſe; I am therefore entirely at the

the mercy of my father; conſequently to diſcloſe our marriage would be to involve me in certain ruin, as I am convinced no ſupplications, no entreaties would ever prevail upon him to pardon ſo imprudent a ſtep; 'tis abſolutely neceſſary therefore that we ſhould conceal it for ever.'

"For ever! (repeated I) gracious Heaven! would it not be better for you at once to avow it, than to be teaſed with continual importunities (which muſt be the caſe) to form another connexion."

'I will not deny, Madeline, (ſaid he) that it is not my intention to be deaf to ſuch importunities: as our marriage is a profound ſecret, I mean it never ſhall be known; that from henceforth we ſhall be ſtrangers to each other, and each again enter the world free to make another choice.'

"Good heavens! what words were thoſe for a wife, for a mother to hear!—The blood run cold through my veins, and for ſome time the faculties of ſpeech were ſuſpended.

"Have

"Have I lived, (I at length exclaimed) have I lived to hear the huſband I adore declare his intention of diſowning me? Have I lived to hear St. Julian avow his deſign of branding his child with infamy?"

'Do not, Madeline, (ſaid he) with the weakneſs peculiar to your ſex, run into complaints at once unjuſt and unavailing; when you mix more in the world, and have opportunities of comparing my conduct with that of others, you will then be convinced that it is not quite ſo baſe or cruel as you now imagine; you will then ſee numbers of your ſex, perhaps as amiable as yourſelf, cruelly forſaken after the firſt ardour of paſſion is extinguiſhed, inſtead of which you will find yourſelf, if your obſtinacy does not counteract my intentions, in poſſeſſion of an ample proviſion, with which you can retire to ſome other part of France, where you are not known, and there, paſſing yourſelf as a widow, bring up your ſon, and, perhaps, make another choice more calculated than your preſent one to render you happy.'

"My heart felt burſting; but I ſtrove to repreſs the grief, the indignation with which it laboured.

"No, St. Julian, (ſaid I, in a ſolemn voice), never will I enter the road of infamy you have marked out for me to take; I am your wife, nor ſhall any power but that, whoſe mandate we muſt all obey, make me give up my claims. What! did you ſnatch me from the altar of my God, from the dwelling of piety and peace, but to plunge me into guilt and miſery?"

'Madeline, (cried he) be wiſe, nor mar my good intentions towards you by uſeleſs endeavours to ſupport claims, which I am determined to deny; 'tis impoſſible, you know, for you to prove your marriage; there were, you may recollect, no witneſſes to it, and with the name of the prieſt who performed the ceremony you are unacquainted.'

"Alas! thoſe were truths which could not be controverted, and deſtitute as I was of any friend

friend to interfere in my behalf, my uncle having paid the laſt ſad debt of nature ſome weeks before, I ſaw no means of eſcaping the fate he doomed me to. I wept, I upbraided, I ſupplicated, but all without effect; and I was ſoon convinced that every ſpark of his former affection was extinguiſhed, and that ſome dangerous rival had taken entire poſſeſſion of his heart.

"Agonized by this conviction, I might perhaps have ſilently ſubmitted to his wiſhes, aſſured that his name, without his regard, could give me no happineſs, had I not conſidered that with his unhappy mother the ſon of St. Julian muſt alſo ſink; maternal tenderneſs urged me therefore to make ſome effort to counteract his cruel and unjuſt intentions.

"I accordingly formed the reſolution of flying to Dauphine, to throw myſelf at the feet of his father, and implore his protection for the deſerted wife and offſpring of his ſon. Alas! it was a reſolution which deſpair and

ignorance of the world only could have prompted; for a heart occupied by avarice and ambition, as was the Marquis's, is ever dead to the nobler ſofter claims of juſtice and humanity.

"As St. Julian departed, he told me he would give me a day or two to conſider of what he had ſaid; if at the expiration of that time he found me inclined to accede to his wiſhes, he would at once ſecure to me the proviſion he had promiſed; but if, on the contrary, he found me ſtill inclined to diſpute them, he would, without farther heſitation abandon me to a world which would laugh at all the allegations I could make againſt him.

"I ſaw no time was to be loſt; the moment therefore he had left me I ſtole from the houſe, and hired a carriage, which I ordered to meet me at an early hour, the next morning, at the end of the ſtreet. Faint, trembling, oppreſt with a thouſand horrors, I commenced my journey with you in my arms.

"Fearful

"Fearful of being purſued, I made the driver, as night approached, turn into an obſcure village, ſome leagues from the road. Here a violent illneſs, brought on by the dreadful agitation I ſuffered, detained me two days, and when I recommenced my journey, I was more dead than alive.

"Oh! how impoſſible to deſcribe the emotions which ſhook my frame as I approached the manſion of Montmorenci; as I ſtopped before thoſe gates which I once hoped I ſhould have entered as the acknowledged wife of St. Julian! for many minutes my feelings prevented my declaring to the aſtoniſhed domeſtics the purport of my viſit; at length I ſummoned ſufficient reſolution to deſire to be ſhewn into the preſence of their Lord. I drew near his apartment more like an unhappy criminal about deprecating vengeance, than an injured ſufferer going to implore juſtice: the moment I beheld his countenance, where pride and ſternneſs only were viſible, the faint hope of obtaining his

protection, which had hitherto cheered my heart, died away; like the drowning wretch, however, graſping at every ſtraw, I determined to eſſay every thing which had a chance of procuring me relief—I therefore caſt myſelf at his feet, and poured forth my ſorrows; but ſcarcely had I concluded my ſad tale, ſcarcely had I raiſed my tearful eyes to his to try if I could perceive one gleam of pity in them, ere a door burſt open, and St. Julian entered. He entered with a countenance inflamed by rage and every direful paſſion. Oh! had a dagger pierced my breaſt I could not have ſuffered greater agonies than I experienced when I beheld thoſe eyes which had once beamed unutterable tenderneſs, now darting the keeneſt glances of reſentment on me.

'You ſee, my Lord, (ſaid he, addreſſing his father,) that I was not miſtaken with regard to this unhappy woman. I was well convinced of the lengths her artifice and ambition would carry her.'

'Such artifice in one ſo young is really aſtoniſhing, (replied the Marquis) and ren-

ders

ders it abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould prevent her having another opportunity of trying to deceive.'

"I attempted to ſpeak, but was interrupted by St. Julian, who directly called in two ſervants, and ordered them to bear me to a remote apartment. Thither, ſhrieking with deſpair, and with you in my arms, I was carried and locked in. A kind of madneſs ſeized me—I could not weep—I could not ſpeak—by cries, by groans I could alone expreſs my miſery.

"Night approached ere any one came near me; a young female then appeared—I merely caſt a glance at her, and then averted my eyes, as a trembling wretch would have done from his executioner; for every heart in the manſion of Montmorenci I fancied ſteeled againſt me. She came to me and entreated me to take ſome refreſhment.

"Surpriſed by the entreaty, and by the gentleneſs with which it was delivered, I looked at her, and beheld a tear ſtealing down

her cheek; it was a ſacred tear, which pity had engendered, and operated more powerfully in calming the violence of my feeling than any arguments could have done. Oh! how ſweet, how ſoothing, when we believe ourſelves utterly abandoned, utterly friendleſs, to be ſurpriſed by finding a heart that compaſſionates us!—

"My tears immediately began to flow, the fever in my brain abated, and I ſtretched out my hand to preſs her's to my boſom.

'Alas! unhappy lady, (ſhe exclaimed) I pity you from my ſoul, and wiſh it was in my power to ſave you from the fate that awaits you.'

"What fate? (cried I, gazing on her); have they planned my death? Ah! no—they would not be ſo merciful as to terminate the anguiſh they have inflicted."

'About the middle of to-night (ſaid ſhe) they mean to put you into a carriage, and ſend you to a houſe of penitents near Paris, where you will for ever be confined from the world, and ſeparated from your ſon.'

—"Horror

— "Horror for ſome time took from me the power of ſpeech.

"Oh! St. Julian, (I at length exclaimed) is this the fate you have decreed for Madeline?—Is this the deſtiny you have doomed her to, whom but a few ſhort months ago you wooed to your arms with vows of never-changing love? — Oh, never let my ſex again confide in man!—Oh, never more let them gaze with pleaſure upon the beam of tenderneſs, nor liſten with delight to the language of love!'—

"On my knees I implored my informer to aſſiſt me to eſcape.

"Not on my own account (cried I) do I plead; ſtripes, dungeons, or perpetual impriſonment, could give little pain to her who has experienced the ſo much greater pain of being deſerted by the man ſhe loves; but on the account of him, who, if deprived of me, would ſurely be deprived of his only earthly friend; for thoſe who exerciſed ſuch unprecedented cruelty upon his mother, would no doubt but ill protect his helpleſs

youth: By the God, then, which you worſhip; by that heaven which you hope to attain, aſſiſt me to fly with my ſon to ſome ſolitary gloom, where I may rear his youth with tenderneſs, or ſee him, while unconſcious of calamity, laid within his grave.

"She raiſed me, and told me, if I would be calm, and thought I could brave the horrors of travelling through lonely woods at ſuch an hour as the preſent, ſhe would try to aſſiſt me in eſcaping. I gave her every aſſurance ſhe deſired, and ſhe loſt no time in conducting me down a flight of back ſtairs terminated by a door that opened into the foreſt. I gave her, at parting, almoſt all I had to beſtow, my thanks, and put a little fancy ring upon her finger to bring me ſometimes to her mind, and make her now and then offer up a prayer for me and my babe.

"My mind was too much diſturbed to ſuffer me to arrange any plan for my future deſtiny: all I could think of was

was to ſeek ſome lonely cottage, where I might ſequeſter myſelf till the heat of that purſuit, which I ſuppoſed would be made after me, ſhould be over.

"Without knowing whither I went, or how far I had wandered, I found myſelf, as if inſtinct had guided me thither, about the middle of the night as well as I could conjecture, the hour which was to have borne me to endleſs confinement, near the habitation where I had reſided with my mother, and which, ſince her death, had been unoccupied. Gently the moon diſpenſed her ſilvery light, and gave a perfect view of all the dear and lovely ſcenes of early youth: Oh! how agonizing were my feelings as I contraſted my preſent miſery with the happineſs I had enjoyed amongſt them a happineſs of which, like a bright viſion, no trace remained but in my memory:—Oh! how excruciating my pangs as I gazed upon the cottage where I had experienced the care, the tenderneſs of a parent, and reflected that I was now a wretch forlorn, without one

friend to protect me, without any covering for my head but the canopy of heaven, without any pillow to repose it on but the cold sod; nothing but religion, which had been early and strongly implanted in my mind, could have prevented my raising the hand of despair against a life, which from being no longer valuable to others, was hateful to myself.

"But I will not (said I) I will not, by any act of rashness forfeit that heaven, where only I can be recompensed for my sorrows.

"Exhausted by my sufferings, I threw myself upon the ground, and as I lulled you upon my bosom, sleep insensibly stole upon me.

"The horror of my waking thoughts tinctured my sleeping ones, and I suddenly awoke in terror: as I started from the ground I beheld a lady and gentleman standing by me, for the morning was far advanced; I gazed upon them wildly, and in the features of the female at length recognised those of the Countess de Valdore, who had mar-

ried a few months previous to my mother's death, and with whom, from having reſided both before and after her union near our cottage, I was well acquainted; ſhe expreſſed the utmoſt aſtoniſhment at the ſituation in which ſhe had diſcovered me, and with a degree of pity that quite overcame me: for as a profuſion of viands will overpower the famiſhed wretch, ſo will unexpected compaſſion the ſad heart that has deemed itſelf utterly abandoned.

"A total weakneſs ſeized me, and I could only anſwer her inquiries with my tears. She ſeated herſelf on the ground, and ſupported my head on her lap, while the Count haſtened to the chateau for a carriage to convey me thither. There I lay a week before I had power to diſcloſe my unhappy ſtory; when I concluded I had the comfort of finding I had ſecured two friends for my child, who would never deſert him; and this comfort was ſurely requiſite to ſave me from diſtraction, for I now learned that St. Julian had

been married four months to the rich and beautiful heireſs of Charette.

'To attempt now, therefore, to redreſs your wrongs, would be unavailing, (ſaid the Count); whilſt St. Julian is intoxicated with love and the attainment of his wiſhes, any effort to do ſo would in all probability expoſe you to his vengeance, and perhaps occaſion your final ſeparation from your ſon: we muſt therefore leave him to the workings of conſcience; though ſometimes ſlow, it is always ſure in its operations, and will yet raiſe its ſcorpion ſtings within his breaſt.'

"With his amiable Counteſs the Count united in aſſurances of friendſhip and protection; the Counteſs told me of the high eſteem and regard ſhe had always felt for me, and that at the death of my mother both ſhe and the Count would gladly have offered me an aſylum in their houſe, had they not naturally ſuppoſed I preferred my uncle's; from the period of my quitting Dauphine, ſhe had never heard concerning me.

'Had I ſooner known your fate, (ſhe ſaid) I ſhould ſooner have tried to alleviate it.'

"Certain that St. Julian would make diligent ſearch after me, in order to try and get me into his power, which if he once diſcovered me, it would be impoſſible to prevent his doing, from his having repreſented me as an artful woman, who had ſeduced his youth and endeavoured to ruin his character; it was deemed expedient that I ſhould in future be ſecluded from the world: for ſuch a purpoſe no place appeared ſo eligible as the deſerted monaſtery in the valley; thither I was accordingly conveyed without the knowledge of any of the family but a confidential ſervant of the Counteſs. A few months after my retirement, I reſigned you to the arms of my friend, for the purpoſe of having you conveyed to her houſe, as the orphan of an eſteemed acquaintance of her Lords.

"Two years have elapſed ſince that period, during which I have heard of St. Julian's attaining

taining his paternal title, of his having a ſon, born to his wiſhes, and of his leading a life of unbounded gaiety and pleaſure—Ah! how different from the one he has doomed me to!

"The attentions of the Count and Counteſs have been unremitted; could kindneſs, could compaſſion have healed the wounds of my heart, they would long ſince have been cloſed.

"In their viſits to me you are often brought:—Ah! how does my breaſt heave with mingled pain and pleaſure as I claſp you to it, and hear your liſping accents. Fair is the promiſe of your infancy, but never, my ſon, will your unfortunate mother ſee it fulfilled; affliction has undermined my health, I daily, hourly grow weaker; I fade like an early flower, o'er which the deſolating blaſt has paſt, ere half its beauties are expanded; and long, long before the bloſſoms of your youth are blown, I ſhall be laid within my cold grave.

"From that grave, as you peruſe this narrative, Oh! think the ſpirit of your mother ſpeaks,

ſpeaks, and charges you to attend to the advice which it contains—charges you never, in reſentment for her wrongs, to forget the reſpect due to your father; ſhe wiſhes you to plead for your rights, to vindicate her character, and prove to the world, that the deſcendant of St. Paul, the daughter of St. Foix, never diſgraced the noble families from which ſhe ſprung, but ſhe wiſhes you to plead with calmneſs, and, if unſucceſsful, to be reſigned.

"She alſo charges you, if only acknowledged as the ſon of an illicit love, to fly from any overtures of kindneſs which may be made you.

"The Count and Counteſs de Valdore have promiſed never to withdraw their protection. Generous pair! may Heaven recompenſe their kindneſs to me and mine.

"They have alſo promiſed, ere they put this narrative into your hands, to prepare you in ſome degree for my unfortunate ſtory: Sad and painful has been my taſk in writing it—Oh! agonizing in the extreme to divulge to my ſon the crimes of his father.

"Oh!

"Oh! St. Julian, beloved, though perjured from every mortal eye, I would have concealed thoſe crimes, had not juſtice to your child compelled me to diſcloſe them.

" Farewell, my boy—my child, farewell! I leave you all I have to beſtow, my bleſſing—may your conduct ever entitle you to that of Heaven, may your mind be fair as your perſon, may your heart ever glow with fervour in the cauſe of virtue, and your hand never lie idle by your ſide when miſery or innocence call for aſſiſtance!

" In happy ignorance and childiſh gaiety often perhaps will your light ſteps bound o'er the ſod which covers my remains; but the period I truſt will arrive when tenderneſs and ſenſibility ſhall guide you to it, to drop a tear to the memory of her whoſe laſt prayer will be breathed for your felicity, to bedew with the ſacred drops of filial affection the grave of your mother.

" MADELINE ST. JULIAN."

The

The tears of Madeline fell as ſhe peruſed the narrative of her unfortunate grandmother, which (too much affected by it to ſpeak), ſhe returned in ſilence to her father.

"You can better conceive than I can deſcribe (ſaid he) the feelings I experienced on peruſing this ſtory. I wept for my mother, I bluſhed for my father, and my heart was divided between affliction and reſentment.

"With the natural impetuoſity of youth, I determined not to let another day elapſe without pleading for thoſe rights which I had been ſo long and ſo unjuſtly deprived of; but convinced that my agitation would not permit me to plead for them in perſon, as I could wiſh, I reſolved on ſending a letter by a ſpecial meſſenger to the caſtle of Montmorenci, where I knew my father reſided, declaring the late diſcovery of my birth, and the manner in which I had been protected from the diſtreſſes his deſertion had expoſed me to.

"I

"I accordingly withdrew from Elvira as ſoon as I was ſufficiently compoſed to pen my letter, which I did in the moſt reſpectful yet energetic manner, and encloſed within it a ſmall miniature of myſelf, drawn by the Counteſs de Valdore's deſire a few months previous to her death, along with her daughter's, for the purpoſe of ornamenting a cabinet, whence I now received it from Elvira: I ſent it with a hope that it might perhaps, by recalling to his memory ſome feature of the woman he had injured, and once tenderly loved, ſoften his mind in my favour, and incline him to do me juſtice.

"My ſufferings till the return of my meſſenger mock deſcription. At his firſt appearance I flew with breathleſs haſte to meet him. The Marquis of Montmorenci (he ſaid) was too ill to anſwer my letter, but he deſired me without delay to repair to his caſtle.

"Oh! gracious Heaven, how rapturous were the feelings of that moment!—I could not doubt but that he deſired to ſee me for the

the purpoſe of bleſſing, of acknowledging me as his ſon, of vindicating the fame of my injured mother.

"Elvira thought as I did; and while a tear of regret for my intended departure ſtrayed down her cheek, congratulated me in the moſt fervent manner on the proſpect there appeared of having my wiſhes realized.

"I ſet out unattended for the manſion of my father, which I entered, though with hope, with emotions that ſhook my frame; the domeſtics were prepared to receive me, and immediately conducted me to the apartment where their Lord lay, apparently much indiſpoſed, and exhibiting but the ruin of thoſe graces which had captivated the too ſuſceptible heart of my mother.

"Trembling I approached, and knelt before him, ſupplicating by my looks his bleſſing.

'With pleaſure (ſaid he, extending his hand) I acknowledge you as my ſon; to diſown you never was my intention.'

"I

" I preſſed his hand to my lips, but could not ſpeak; the reception I met with, the idea of being able to vindicate the fame of my mother, quite overpowered me. Alas! ſhort was the duration of my joy.

' Riſe, (continued my father) I have much to ſay; but ere I proceed, let me (looking as he ſpoke towards a young man who ſat at ſome diſtance from the couch, and whom my agitation had hitherto prevented me from noticing) let me preſent you to the Count St. Julian, who has kindly promiſed to conſider you as a brother.'

" Surpriſe, intermingled with indignation pervaded my heart, on hearing the Marquis addreſs another perſon by the title to which alone I had a right. I ſuppreſſed thoſe feelings however from a hope that an explanation would enſue, which ſhould appeaſe them.

' Chance (proceeded my father) made him acquainted with your ſtory: During a late illneſs, from which I am now but barely recovered, I ordered every letter or meſſage which

which came to me to be delivered to him—consequently your's fell into his hands; I therefore deemed it requiſite that he ſhould be preſent at our interview, deemed it an abſolute duty to him, his mother, and myſelf, that he ſhould, whilſt he heard me acknowledge you as my ſon, ſolemnly diſacknowledge you as the heir of Montmorenci; no ties but thoſe of love ever exiſted between your mother and me, and if you have been credulous enough to give implicit credit to the artful tale ſhe fabricated, all my ſchemes in your favour muſt be defeated:—Be wiſe, ſtudy your own intereſt, declare your total renunciation of your chimerical claims, and enſure my kindneſs and protection.'

"Never, my Lord, (cried I); if your kindneſs and protection can only be acquired by ſtigmatizing the character of my mother, and degrading myſelf, the ſon of Madeline St. Foix will never conſent to be called the child of infamy; my opinion of her veracity is unalterable, and though I may not be able

to

to ſupport, I never will renounce my claims."

'Then you muſt for ever be an alien to me, (ſaid the Marquis). Go, (he continued, with an agitated voice and a countenance inflamed by reſentment), go, leſt you ſhould tempt me to curſe the hour in which you were born.'

"With difficulty I ſuppreſſed the feelings which ſwelled my heart almoſt to burſting, but I determined not to forget that the author of my injuries was alſo the author of my being.

"I directly left the caſtle, and ſet out for the manſion which had foſtered my helpleſs infancy. Ah! how different was the ſituation of my mind now from what it had been when I journeyed from it! — On entering it a ſervant informed me that M. de Valdore was arrived. I was too much diſturbed to think of then paying my compliments to him, but I deſired to be ſhewn directly to Lady Elvira. Her tenderneſs, ſaid I to myſelf, will ſoften the bitterneſs of diſap-

diſappointment; her gentleneſs will ſooth the perturbations of my ſoul.

"I found her alone and in the deepeſt dejection. She ſtarted with aſtoniſhment at my unexpected appearance, and her eyes inſtantly brightened with pleaſure; a brightneſs, however, which quickly vaniſhed on ſurveying my countenance.

'My dear Lauſane, (ſaid ſhe, extending her hand) what mean thoſe looks?'

"Ah! my Elvira, (cried I) do they not render language unneceſſary?—do they not tell you that my hopes were too ſanguine?—that I have returned without finding the father I expected?"

'Good Heaven! (ſaid ſhe, burſting into tears) you overwhelm me with miſery.—Oh! Lauſane, what will become of you?'

"Do not, my dear Elvira, (cried I) aggravate my feelings, by giving way to your's. My ſituation is not deſperate!—Reflect that the bounty of your noble parents ſecured me from experiencing any pecuniary diſtreſs through the deſertion of my father."

'Oh!

'Oh! Lauſane (exclaimed ſhe in an agony) you are miſtaken. M. de Valdore, who reached the chateau ſoon after you had left it, immediately opened the will of my father, in which your name was no where viſible: this, I am convinced, unintentional omiſſion, would give me little concern, could I immediately do what I know my father meant to have done for you; but M. de Valdore, without whoſe conſent I cannot act, appears too ſelfiſh and illiberal to let me hope he will permit me to follow my wiſhes. Surely, ſurely my father was deceived with reſpect to the diſpoſition of his relative, or he never would have choſen ſuch a guardian for his Elvira; already he has told me, that if you returned to the caſtle, he would not ſuffer you to continue in it; views reſpecting me and his ſon, have, I am confident, inſpired this reſolution; he wiſhes an alliance to take place between us, and thinks that if you remained here, you might perhaps defeat thoſe wiſhes: but I will kneel, I will ſupplicate him to drop the determination he has avowed;

ed; ſhould he, however, have the cruelty to perſevere in it, I can give you jewels of ſufficient value to ſupport you in the ſtile of life you have hitherto been accuſtomed to, till I am of age, when the doors of Elvira's manſion ſhall be again opened with delight to the adopted ſon of her parents, the friend of her youth, the brother of her heart.'

"Sad, ſilent, overwhelmed with miſery, I liſtened to Elvira; her words gave the final ſtroke to my happineſs; all the horrors of dependance ſtared me in the face, and ere ſhe had ceaſed to ſpeak, I had determined on ending the life upon which they ſeemed entailed.

"Formed for domeſtic comforts, (ſaid I within myſelf) ſuch comforts as my ſituation precludes my enjoying, life without them would be a burthen. I will not, therefore, toil to ſupport an exiſtence valueleſs to me; I will not enter a world where I have no relative to guide, no friend to ſooth me; where I might meet ſuch men as the Marquis of Montmorenci and M. de Valdore; I will go

to the manſion from which I am exiled, and gratify its maſter by deſtroying, perhaps in his preſence, the being he deteſts.

" A kind of gloomy compoſure took poſſeſſion of me from the moment I had conceived my fatal reſolution. I made no comments to Elvira upon the conduct of her guardian; I attempted not to diſſuade her from pleading to him in my favour, but pretending fatigue, (I ſaid) I would retire for a little while to my chamber.

" As ſoon as I entered it, fearful of myſelf, fearful that my reſolution would be ſhaken if I allowed myſelf a moment's thought, I put into my boſom a dagger, the gift of my late departed benefactor, and ſtealing out, bid, as I then thought, a laſt adieu to my hitherto happy home. I flew rather than walked, and about ſun-ſet found myſelf in the gloomieſt part of the foreſt of Montmorenci, and within view of the caſtle. Exhauſted by fatigue and agitation, I threw myſelf upon the ground: it was a fine ſummer

mer evening, and the beauty and ſerenity of nature formed a melancholy contraſt to the horror and agony of my mind; the hour recalled a thouſand tender images to my memory, a thouſand happy ſcenes in which I had been engaged with the beloved protectors of my youth.

"Oh! joys departed! (I exclaimed) how bitter is your recollection!—but, for the laſt time, it now wrings my heart; to-morrow I ſhall be inſenſible of pain or pleaſure.—Oh! ſun, (I cried, raiſing my eyes to that reſplendent orb, which in majeſtic glory was retiring from the world) never more will thy bright beams give me joy or vigour; ere they again viſit the earth, I ſhall be cold and inanimate as the ſod on which I now reſt. Father of mercies! (I proceeded) raiſing myſelf on my knees) to thee I fly. I am forlorn, I am an outcaſt, where then but in thy boſom can I expect comfort or protection? Forgive me then, forgive me, for appearing in thy preſence unſummoned; and, Oh! ſhould the eye of a father behold

my remains, behold them with compunction, let, I implore thee, that compunction extenuate his errors, nor ſuffer the blood I ſhed to reſt upon his head.

"I attempted to raiſe the dagger to my heart, but felt at the inſtant my arm ſeized. Aſtoniſhed, I looked round, and beheld him who was unjuſtly ſtiled St. Julian.

"I roſe, and tried but in vain, to diſengage myſelf from him—rage took immediate poſſeſſion of my ſoul.

"Releaſe me (cried I) directly, leſt paſſion ſhould endue me with double ſtrength, and tempt me to raiſe that hand againſt your breaſt which now I only wiſh to turn againſt my own."

'Your threats are in vain, (ſaid he); I will not releaſe you till you aſſure me you have dropped your preſent dreadful intentions—till you aſſure me that you will have mercy upon your own ſoul. —Oh! kneel and deprecate the vengeance of heaven, for having thought of diſobeying its moſt ſacred injunctions, for having doubted its promiſes of protection,

protection, and deſpairingly determined on deſtroying what, as it gave, ſo only it ſhould take.'

"The acknowledged heir of Montmorenci, the ſon of tenderneſs and proſperity, (cried I) may preach againſt a crime which he beholds no proſpect of ever being tempted to commit; but were our ſituations reverſed, was he, like me, an outcaſt, an exile from the houſe that ſhould have ſheltered and protected him, he would, like me, perhaps gladly reſign a being valueleſs to himſelf from being ſo to others."

'To more ſtrength of mind, more firmneſs than other men, (ſaid he) I do not pretend; but ſtill I humbly truſt that in the very depth of miſery the ſacred ſentiments of religion I have imbibed would guard me againſt an act which would for ever cloſe the doors of happineſs againſt me. You ſhall not (he continued) throw me from you; I will ſave, I will ſerve you—we are brothers, ſuffer us to be friends. My heart conceived

a partiality for you the firſt moment I beheld you, and I ſhould then have declared it, had I thought its diſcloſure would have been pleaſing to you.'

"I will not, my love, (proceeded Clermont, after a ſhort pauſe) dwell longer upon a ſcene which I perceive has already inſpired you with horror; ſuffice it to ſay I was not able to reſiſt his kindneſſes, which, from being unexpected, had a double effect; his gentleneſs allayed the ſtormy paſſions of my ſoul, his arguments convinced me of the enormity of the crime I had been about committing, and I dropped the inſtrument of intended deſtruction to claſp his hand to a breaſt which heaved with ſtrong emotion, forgetting in that moment that he was the uſurper of my rights.

"Ah! had he been convinced he was the uſurper of them, I am confident he would, without heſitation, have withdrawn from the place I ſhould have filled; but the artful tale of the Marquis of Montmorenci completely deceived him: and while his generous heart acknow-

acknowledged me as his brother, he conſidered me as the illegitimate ſon of his father.

"From the hour our friendſhip commenced I determined never more to mention the painful ſubject of my mother's wrongs and mine. But ere I would accept his offers of aſſiſtance, I made him aſſure me that his own feelings alone prompted him to ſerve me, ſolemnly vowing within my mind never through any hands, or by any means, to receive any mark of kindneſs from my father, except acknowledged by him in the light I wiſhed.

"St. Julian (for ſo I now called him, though my heart ſwelled as I did ſo), informed me that in a few days he was going to Italy, and aſked me to accompany him thither. This I gladly conſented to do, and, in the interim he ſaid he would bring me to the houſe of a cottager, where I might be ſecretly lodged: 'And ere we return to France, (continued he) we may think of ſome plan for your future eſtabliſhment in life.'

"Ere I commenced my journey, I wrote to Elvira, acquainting her of the friend I had gained, and imploring her forgiveneſs for quitting her houſe in the abrupt manner I had done, carefully concealing, however, the motive which had prompted me to do ſo.

"St. Julian informed me, that his preſent excurſion was merely for pleaſure, as he had already made the tour of Europe.

"I ſhall paſs over the admiration, the enthuſiaſtic delight, which pervaded my mind as I aſcended the Alps, and viewed nature in ſome of her moſt ſublime forms.

"On the evening of the firſt day's journey St. Julian told me he meant to paſs the night at the habitation of a very particular friend of his.

'Some months ago, (ſaid he) as I was returning from Italy to France, I was ſeverely hurt near his houſe by the overturning of my carriage, and from him, to whom I was then a total ſtranger, received every attention which politeneſs or humanity could dictate. I ſhould therefore deem myſelf highly ungrateful

ungrateful if I could think of paſſing his door without paying him my reſpects.

'He is a foreigner, far advanced in life; a man of diſtinction, but unfortunate. Of the troubles which ſome years back agitated England, and its ſiſter kingdom, I dare ſay you have heard. Lord Dunlere (ſo my friend is ſtiled) was one of the moſt faithful and zealous ſupporters of James the Second, and in conſequence of his attachment to that unhappy Prince, became an exile from his native country, Ireland, and loſt a conſiderable property in it:—with all he could preſerve, a ſmall pittance, he retired to the obſcurity of theſe mountains, where, with two daughters, and a few affectionate followers, he lives a life of peaceful retirement, looking back on the world he has left without regret, and forward to the one to come with every hope of felicity.'

''Tis impoſſible to give you any adequate idea of the benevolence of his diſpoſition, the urbanity, the cheerfulneſs of his temper: he continually brings to mind the

ſtories we have heard of the patriarchs; his ſimplicity, his hoſpitality, exactly accords with the account we have received of them.

'Of his daughters I muſt not ſpeak, becauſe I could not do them juſtice. I muſt, however, timely caution you againſt the charms of the elder, who is engaged to a gentleman, to whom ſhe is prevented by particular circumſtances from being immediately united; but the heart as well as the hand of the younger are at liberty I underſtand, and to wiſh them my brother's would be to wiſh him the greateſt bleſſing man could poſſeſs.'

"Soon after this converſation we ſtopped at Lord Dunlere's. St. Julian went in firſt to prepare him for my reception, and in a few minutes returned with his venerable friend, whoſe looks were calculated to excite an immediate prepoſſeſſion in his favour.

"He welcomed me with the utmoſt kindneſs, and conducted me to the apartment where his daughters ſat. I cannot give you any idea of the ſurpriſe, the admiration which ſeized me on beholding them:—I ſaw in-

deed that my brother was right in not attempting to deſcribe charms which no deſcription could have done juſtice to. My eyes wandered for ſome time from one to the other, ſcarcely knowing which to give the preference of beauty to, but at laſt ſettled on the lovely face of Geraldine, the younger.

"Inſtead of ſtaying but one night, we remained a week under the roof of Lord Dunlere — a week of ſuch happineſs as I had never before experienced — a week in which new feelings, new ſentiments took poſſeſſion of my ſoul, and taught me that I had hitherto been a ſtranger to the greateſt pleaſure, the greateſt pain man can feel. I wiſhed, I determined, however, if poſſible, to conceal my feelings—I regarded my paſſion as hopeleſs, and pride actuated me to hide it; but in vain I ſtrove to do ſo; my melancholy, my total abſtraction, amidſt the new and lovely ſcenes through which I travelled, and the converſations into which I inſenſibly entered, betrayed me to St. Julian.

He laughed, yet pitied, but neither deſired me to hope nor deſpair.

'Lauſane (ſaid he, one morning, after we had been two or three weeks in Italy), would it be vaſtly diſagreeable to you if, inſtead of paſſing two months here as we at firſt propoſed, we returned to Lord Dunlere's, and ſpent them there?'

"Ah! St. Julian, (cried I) you know my heart too well to render it neceſſary for me to anſwer you.

"In ſhort, without longer delay we returned to that manſion on which my thoughts continually dwelt. Here, in the preſence of her whom my ſoul adored, I forgot my reſolution of trying to conquer — to conceal my paſſion:—ah! how indeed could I do ſo, when in the ſoft glances of her eyes I ſometimes fancied I ſaw an aſſurance of its being returned. At length the period for quitting her arrived—for quitting without the ſmalleſt hope of again beholding her: the moſt excruciating anguiſh filled my heart the moment it was announced, and with difficulty I concealed it.

"Unable to converſe the evening preceding the day fixed for my departure, I left Lord Dunlere and St. Julian together, and withdrew to an alcove in a lonely and romantic part of the garden, where ſome of my happieſt hours had been paſſed with Geraldine, indulging a melancholy kind of pleaſure at the idea of there giving vent to my feelings.

"You may imagine what my emotions were, when, on entering it, the firſt object I beheld was Geraldine!—She was alone, and dejectedly leaning on a little table. Reaſon bid me fly, but paſſion overpowered, and at her feet I poured forth my ſorrows. Ah! how amply did I think myſelf recompenſed for thoſe ſorrows when I beheld the tear of pity ſtealing down her cheek, when I heard her ſoft and faltering accents declare I was not indifferent to her:—but the rapture that declaration gave was tranſient; I reflected on my ſituation, and my ſoul immediately upbraided me with cruelty to her, and treachery to Lord Dunlere, in avowing my paſſion, and

and pleading for a return to it, when no hope exiſted of our ever being united.

" Pity me, Geraldine, (ſaid I, wildly ſtarting from her feet), but no longer love me; yield not to ſentiments which will, if indulged, entail anguiſh upon your gentle ſoul, ſuch anguiſh as now pervades mine—the anguiſh of a hopeleſs paſſion:—we muſt part, part without an idea of again meeting;—I cannot, dare not aſk you to become mine; cannot aſk you to beſtow your hand on him who is but a dependant. No, Geraldine, were it offered I would reject it, from a conviction that by accepting it I ſhould plunge you in diſtreſs!—Oh! mild as your virtues may your deſtiny be,—different, ah! far different from that of the unhappy Lauſane's!

" A ſudden ruſtling amongſt the trees behind me made me turn round, and I beheld Lord Dunlere. I was a little ſtartled, but the conſciouſneſs of not having attempted to take any advantage of the tenderneſs of his daughter, prevented my feeling that confuſion I ſhould otherwiſe have experienced at being

being thus ſurpriſed. I bowed, and was retiring from the alcove, when he ſtopped me—

'Lauſane (ſaid he), do not let me frighten you away: let me try (added he, with a benignant ſmile) whether I cannot obtain your pardon for my intruſion.'

"He ſeated himſelf by the almoſt fainting Geraldine, and motioned me to ſit beſide him.

'You will not, Lauſane, (ſaid he, after a pauſe) be ſurpriſed I think, when I inform you that I have overheard your converſation, nor will you, I hope, regret my having done ſo; it was one which reflected the higheſt honour on your heart. He who can ſoar above ſelfiſh conſiderations, who can reſiſt the pleadings of paſſion for fear of inconveniencing the woman he loves, evinces a generoſity, a ſenſibility, that does credit to human nature.

'I have long ſuſpected your attachment; you will believe I did not diſapprove it, when I confeſs I felt happy to think it was returned.

'To men of virtue, not to men of greatneſs, I always wiſhed to give my daughters; they

they only, of all the numerous connexions which once bleſſed me, remain; conſequently my felicity ſolely depends upon their's: I therefore determined never to controul their inclinations, if ſuch as reaſon could approve.'

"Oh! my Lord, (I exclaimed) I cannot give utterance to my feelings; but, ah! will you indeed perſevere in your generous intentions when you hear my ſad ſtory, when you hear that I have been not only deprived of fortune, but the name I have a right to?"

'I am already acquainted with your ſtory, (he replied); Count St. Julian related it a few days after your introduction to me. Your now mentioning it reminds me of a preliminary which muſt be ſettled ere I poſitively conſent to give you my daughter, namely, that you ſolemnly promiſe never to enter again upon the ſubject of former grievances.'

"This was a promiſe which, even without having ſuch an inducement as he now held out for making, I would not have heſitated to give, having long before determined to

be

be ſilent about wrongs which I could not gain redreſs for.

'If then (reſumed he) you think you can be happy in the retirement in which we live, for my fortune will not permit me to give you the power of entering the gay world, receive the hand of my daughter.'

"On my knees I expreſſed my gratitude, on my knees with truth aſſured him, that a deſert with her would be a paradiſe. From his arms I received the moſt lovely and beloved of women. Oh! moment of ecſtacy, in which I folded my Geraldine to my heart as my deſtined wife—in which I kiſſed away the tear that hung upon her glowing cheek, like the ſweet dew of the morning on the ſilken leaves of the roſe!

"St. Julian, who appeared almoſt overpowered with delight at my happineſs, put off his journey in order to be preſent at my marriage, and gave me the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of dividing with me his paternal fortune whenever he came into poſſeſſion of it.

"He

"He left me the moſt bleſſed of men. Oh! days of delight, rapid in your courſe, and ſucceeded by years of miſery and horror!

"I had been married about three months when I received a letter from my brother, informing me that he was ill, and anxiouſly deſirous of ſeeing me. I ſighed at the idea of even a tranſient ſeparation from my love, but I could not reſiſt the call of friendſhip, and accordingly ſet out for a cottage near the caſtle of Montmorenci, where St. Julian had once before lodged, and now appointed to ſee me.

"The heavineſs of heart with which I commenced my journey was ſurely a preſentiment of the ills that were approaching. Oh! venerable Dunlere, thy happineſs and mine was then about ſetting!

"The chateau de Valdore lay in my way to the caſtle of Montmorenci; I could not think of paſſing it without inquiring after the friend of my youth, from whom I had heard but once ſince my departure from her houſe; our correſpondence, as ſhe then informed me

me, having been prohibited by her guardian. I went through a private path to the chateau, which conducted me directly to the hall occupied by the ſervants: here, amidſt many ſtrangers I ſoon diſcovered ſome of the old domeſtics, and from them learned that M. de Valdore and his family reſided at the chateau, and that Lady Elvira's ſituation was unaltered. I ſent to requeſt an interview, and was almoſt immediately ſummoned to her: ſhe received me with the moſt rapturous delight, and tears involuntarily fell from me as I recollected the kindneſs of her parents, and witneſſed her pleaſure at beholding me.

"When we grew a little compoſed, I anſwered her eager enquiries concerning all that had befallen me ſince our ſeparation, and my preſent ſituation: but, Oh! what were my emotions when, as I mentioned that ſituation, I ſaw the blood forſake her cheeks, and diſcovered that it was more than friendſhip which ſhe felt for me!

'Married

'Married!' ſhe repeated in a faint voice—ſhe pauſed—ſhe ſeemed trying to recollect herſelf, and attempted to wiſh me joy; but her tongue could not utter what ſhe wiſhed to ſay, and her head ſunk upon my ſhoulder. Oh! Geraldine, ſurely I did not wrong thy love by the tears, the tears of unutterable tenderneſs which I ſhed upon her pale cheek—by the ſighs which heaved my boſom on hearing her's.

"She ſoon however recovered:—her mind was the ſeat of every virtue, and ſhrunk from the idea of betraying feelings contrary to propriety—

'Lauſane, (ſaid ſhe) be aſſured I rejoice at your preſent happineſs; the period I truſt will arrive when I ſhall have an opportunity of beholding it; prepare your lady againſt that period to love and eſteem me; tell her you have friend, a ſiſter, to introduce to her.'

"Already (cried I) ſhe is acquainted with the virtues of Elvira; already taught to love and eſteem her.

"In

"In pity to her feelings, which I ſaw ſhe could ill ſuppreſs, I determined to ſhorten my viſit: when ſhe ſaw me riſing to depart, ſhe deſired me to ſtop another moment—

'I have a preſent (ſaid ſhe) to ſend your lady: you know I often amuſed myſelf by copying pictures?—amongſt the reſt (continued ſhe, with a bluſh) I copied your's, and now requeſt you will take it to your lady.'

"She retired without permitting me to ſpeak, and returned in a few minutes with it: it was the ſame which you now have, and which by being an exact copy of the one I ſent my father, led to the late diſcovery.

"From that period particular circumſtances, not neceſſary to explain, prevented my ſeeing or hearing any thing of the deſtiny of Elvira, till chance conducted her to our cottage. She then informed me, that ſoon after ſhe was of age, ſhe had united herſelf

to

to the Count de Merville, whoſe virtues and tenderneſs rendered her, during his life time, one of the happieſt of women, and thus rewarded her for the reſolution with which ſhe ſet about conquering her firſt attachment from the moment ſhe knew it was improper to be indulged.

"From the chateau de Valdore I repaired to the cottage where my brother had deſired to ſee me. He received me with the utmoſt affection, and I found he had not deceived me by ſaying he was ill; it was an illneſs however which ſeemed occaſioned more by agitation than any bodily complaint; and I afterwards diſcovered I was not wrong in this opinion.

"Oh! had he confided in me; Oh! had he then opened his heart, divulged its cares, its anxieties, what miſery, what horror would he have ſaved us both from experiencing!

"I had not been above a week with him when I was overwhelmed with ſorrow by a letter

letter from my wife, containing the melancholy intelligence of her lovely ſiſter Eleanora's death.

"I could not heſitate a moment about returning to her directly; yet at the inſtant I determined on doing ſo, my heart was almoſt divided between her and my brother, who was ſeized with a violent fever the very day on which I heard from her.

"I will not pain your gentle ſoul, my Madeline, by deſcribing the ſituation in which I found your mother, or relating the numerous train of calamities that followed the death of her ſiſter; it is ſufficient for me to ſay that within a few months after her deceaſe I loſt my brother and my wife.

"Ah, heavens! even at this diſtant period I ſhudder at the recollection of the excruciating anguiſh I endured on being deprived of friends ſo beloved. The world ſeemed a blank, and nothing but religion and tenderneſs for you could have prevented my quitting it; nor has time done more than appeaſe the violence

violence of that anguiſh.—Oh! never, never can the barb of ſorrow be extracted from my heart; and reſpect for the memory of my mother, affection for you, could only have tempted me to quit a retirement, where unreſtrained and unobſerved I could have indulged my feelings.

"Lord Dunlere ſoon followed his children to their grave; the wreck of his fortune was placed in the hands of a banker at Paris, who failed about the time of his death. Thus, from neceſſity as well as choice, I ſought the obſcurity in which you were brought up.

"Diſguſted with the world, I changed my name, in order to conceal myſelf from every one who had known me before, and thus prevent my retirement from being interrupted.

"I carefully concealed my ſtory from you, well knowing from your ſenſibility the pain you would feel if acquainted with my injuries.

"Alas!

"Alas! too late is the hand of my father extended to do me juſtice; neither wealth nor titles can now confer pleaſure upon me, and the coronet he is about placing upon my brow, I ſhould reject, was it not to have the power of tranſmitting it to the child of my lamented love."

CHAP. VI.

"Thus conſcience does make cowards of us all."

HERE ceaſed Clermont, or, as we ſhall hereafter call him, St. Julian; but he ceaſed without gratifying the curioſity of Madeline: much of his ſtory, ſhe was convinced, remained untold, and ſhe ſhuddered as ſhe thought it was concealed merely becauſe it was too dreadful to be known.

"Oh, ſurely, (ſhe ſaid, within herſelf) ſome myſterious circumſtances muſt have attended the fate of my mother, or ere this my father would have mentioned her to me—

ere this would have afforded me the melancholy pleaſure of knowing I was deſcended from ſo amiable a woman, and taught me to reverence her memory; but what he wiſhes to hide I will not try to diſcover, confident as I am that if a full explanation of paſt events could have given me pleaſure, I ſhould have received it from him."

When St. Julian came within ſight of his father's reſidence, the ſtrong emotions which the idea of his approaching interview with that father inſpired, took from him all further power of utterance.

The day was declining, and the deep gloom of the foreſt heightened the melancholy which the recital of paſt events had infuſed into the hearts of the travellers.

As ſoon as the carriage entered the court, the doors of the hall were thrown open, and a number of ſervants appeared, with eager

impatience in their looks, to ſee and receive the newly declared heir of Montmorenci.

St. Julian now ſtrove to regain his compoſure, that he might appear to bear the unexpected reverſe in his ſituation with that calm dignity befitting a cultivated mind, and one which built not its happineſs on the adventitious gifts of fortune; but vainly did he ſtrive to do ſo. He trembled as he entered the ancient manſion of his foreſathers, from which he had been ſo long unjuſtly exiled, trembled with violent emotion as he ſurveyed their warlike trophies, to which the ſpirit in his boſom told him he might have added, had not the hand of injuſtice plunged him in obſcurity.

The reſentment this idea excited was as tranſient however as involuntary, and though involuntary he repented it.

He was now called, he conſidered, to the preſence of his father to receive from his hand

hands, as far as in his power to make it, atonement for every wrong.

"And if ſuch atonement ſatisfies heaven, (cried he) as we are aſſured it does, ſhould it not amply ſatisfy weak and erring man?"

Agitation cauſed him to pauſe in the hall, and the domeſtics ſeemed pleaſed with the opportunity he thus afforded them of gratifying their curioſity; one of them bowing low at length ſpoke —

"The Marquis impatiently expects your arrival, my Lord, (ſaid he); ſhall I have the honour of conducting you to him?"

St. Julian aſſented by an inclination of his head, and was immediately uſhered up ſtairs to the apartment where his father ſat.

On reaching the door he took the hand of Madeline, who with trembling ſteps had followed him to it.

The Marquis attempted to riſe at their entrance, but neither his ſtrength nor ſpirits ſeconded the effort, and faint and almoſt breathleſs he ſunk back upon his chair.

St. Julian and Madeline knelt before him.

"Let the bleſſing of a father, (ſaid St. Julian in a ſolemn voice) at length rejoice my heart."

The Marquis raiſed his venerable head—

"I am too unworthy to dare to give it (he exclaimed); but may heaven bleſs you, may all that can render life deſirable be your's, long, long after I am laid within that grave where I now wiſh to ſhroud my ſorrows and my ſhame!"

"Oh, my father, (cried St. Julian, penetrated by his language), ſpeak not ſo again; wiſh not again to deprive your ſon of an inexpreſſible

expreſſible comfort—the comfort of trying to mitigate your ſorrows."

The Marquis embraced him, but was unable for ſome minutes to ſpeak; then ſuddenly raiſing his head—

"Treat me not with tenderneſs, (he ſaid, while a frown overſpread his countenance) reproach, revile, neglect me, and you will ſhew me mercy; for you will then ſave my heart from the intolerable pangs which kindneſs and attention ſo unmerited from you muſt give it. Oh! my ſon, my ſon, (he continued, claſping his hands together, and all the auſterity of his countenance vaniſhing), you are now amply avenged, and I am amply puniſhed. Had virtue been the guide of my actions, excluſive of that happineſs which ever attends a quiet conſcience, I ſhould have had the happineſs of being able to enjoy the ſociety of my ſon; but now, what then would have been my bleſſing, almoſt becomes my curſe; for not a word of tenderneſs that paſſes your

your lips, not a beam of love from your eye, but will come like daggers to my heart."

"Far better had it been then (ſaid St. Julian) that I had remained in my obſcurity, if I am only taken from it to aggravate the woes of a father: permit me, my Lord, (cried he, with increaſing emotion), again to retire to it; permit me to withdraw from your preſence a being ſo injurious to your tranquillity."

"No, (exclaimed the Marquis eagerly) never, never ſhall you, except you really wiſh to do ſo, withdraw yourſelf from me. Excuſe what I have ſaid, make ſome allowances for the agitation of ſuch a meeting as our's; my compoſure will ſoon, I truſt, return, and I ſhall then, I make no doubt, be able to enjoy your ſociety.

"Riſe now, my children, (extending a hand to St. Julian and Madeline) 'tis I ſhould have knelt to you; but ſince you knelt for a bleſſing, though unworthy of giving, receive it: may happineſs and honour, both in their fulleſt extent, ever be your's; may thy weakneſs (turning to Madeline, and kiſſing her

her ſoft cheek), ever find a tender guardian in thy father; and may his ſufferings and filial piety to me be amply recompenſed by thy affection and duty!"

He ſeated them on each ſide of himſelf, and the violence of his feelings having a little abated, began, notwithſtanding the avowed wiſhes of St. Julian to the contrary, the hiſtory of his repentance.

"The dreadful fate of my ſon made me recollect my paſt conduct; all its enormities ſtared me in the face, and I wondered that the puniſhment of heaven had been ſo long delayed. Oh! wretch, (I cried, in the excruciating anguiſh of my ſoul) thy crimes have at length juſtly provoked the vengeance of Heaven, and drawn down deſtruction upon the head of thy ſon!——

"The idea, that the ſins of the father had been the occaſion of the death of the ſon, almoſt ſhook Reaſon from her throne; horrors, beyond language to expreſs, took poſſeſſion

of me: — to try to appeaſe them, appeaſe agonies which often urged me to complete the meaſure of my guilt, by raiſing the hand of ſuicide againſt my life.

"I ſent for a Monk from a neighbouring Convent, to pour out my ſoul in confeſſion to him; an holy act which I had long omitted, from a conſciouſneſs that till now it would have been a mockery of heaven, as till now the real ſigh of repentance had never heaved my breaſt."

'My ſon, (cried the good man) you judge rightly in thinking that your conduct has cauſed your preſent afflictions; a merciful Being has ſent them, in order to awaken you to repentance, and by ſuffering here, ſave your precious ſoul from ſuffering hereafter. Without further murmurs, therefore, ſubmit to your deprivations as to a righteous puniſhment, and ſtrive by every atonement in your power to expiate your crimes; ſo may you hope for a gleam of returning peace, ſo hope for ſupport in the hour of death, when

when all the terrors of another world are opening to your view.'

"In conſequence of his words, and the pleadings of my own conſcience, I directly ordered the moſt diligent ſearch to be made after you, but without effect. I then drew up a paper, acknowledging my marriage with your mother, and, conſequently, you as my heir; which I lodged in the convent where my Confeſſor lived, that if by any chance either he or any of his holy brothers ſhould hereafter hear of you, or any offspring of your's, they might be able to authenticate your title to the Caſtle of Montmorenci.

"Gratefully I return thanks to Heaven for permitting me to do that juſtice to you which I gave to others the power of performing; the pleaſure derived from that idea will, I make no doubt, in a few days alleviate my feelings. But, Oh! my ſon, if your attentions have not always power to mitigate my ſadneſs—if, whilſt receiving them, the ſigh of regret, the tear of tender recollection,

ſhould obtrude, be not offended, whilſt I rejoice for the ſon I have recovered, I cannot help mourning for the one I have loſt: he was all that the fondeſt father could deſire! The proudeſt of the ſons of men might have gloried in being called his parent. Ignorant as well as innocent of my great offences, his praiſes cannot diſpleaſe you; but if they ſhould, let the reflection of his being now in his cold and dreary tomb, where he can no longer interpoſe between you and your rights, remove your reſentment."

'Oh! my father, (cried St. Julian, his tearful eye evincing the truth of his words) little do you know my heart if you think it can feel diſpleaſure at the praiſes of my brother.'

"I believe you, my ſon, (ſaid the Marquis) and the belief gives me pleaſure; for to think you will ſometimes permit me to talk of him to you, ſooths my feelings."

The appearance of a domeſtic now interrupted the converſation, and the Marquis led Madeline

Madeline down ſtairs. The ſupper was laid out in one of the ſtate apartments which had been long diſuſed; and though every thing was magnificent, every thing was gloomy.

Fatigued by her journey, or rather by the emotions of her mind, Madeline ſoon after ſupper, entreated permiſſion to retire to her chamber; an attendant was accordingly ſummoned to conduct her to it, and on leaving the parlour ſhe found the houſekeeper waiting in the hall for that purpoſe.

"Well, I am happy, (cried ſhe, ſimpering and courteſying), that I have an opportunity at laſt of wiſhing your La'ſhip joy. Dear me, I have been ſo ſurpriſed at what has lately happened! Who could ever have thought that the night I had the honour of ſeeing your La'ſhip here, I ſhould have had the ſo much greater honour of calling you Miſtreſs."

Madeline

Madeline received her compliment with a faint ſmile, for her heart was too heavy to permit her to anſwer it as at another time ſhe might have done; nor was her melancholy decreaſed on entering her ſpacious chamber, whoſe faded tapeſtry and tarniſhed furniture ſpoke its long deſertion and neglect.

"I hope your La'ſhip does not diſlike this apartment, (ſaid the houſekeeper, on perceiving Madeline pauſe at the entrance, and look round her with a kind of dread); it is one of the moſt magnificent in the caſtle I can aſſure you, and was occupied by my late Lady, the Marchioneſs, ſince whoſe death it has neither been uſed or altered."

"No, (replied Madeline, advancing, and endeavouring to ſhake off the impreſſion which its gloom had made upon her mind), I do not diſlike it."

"That door (cried the houſekeeper) opens into the dreſſing-room; there my lady uſed to paſs many of her hours: it was fitted up

up entirely under her direction, and ornamented with portraits of ſeveral of her moſt particular friends; amongſt the pictures is one of herſelf, and another of Lord Philippe, her ſon, drawn about a year before his death; the room ſtill remains juſt in the ſame ſtate as when ſhe died."

An irreſiſtible impulſe prompted Madeline immediately to take a view of theſe pictures; and ſhe directly entered the dreſſing-room ſtill attended by the houſekeeper.

The firſt ſhe examined was the Marchioneſs: it repreſented a woman in all the bloom of youth and of the moſt exquiſite beauty; ſhe turned from it, after expreſſing her admiration, to Lord Philippe's. But, Oh! what were her feelings at that moment, when the exact reſemblance of de Sevignie met her eyes.

With all the wildneſs of aſtoniſhment ſhe gazed upon it: "Are you ſure (cried ſhe, glancing for an inſtant at the houſekeeper, and

and ſpeaking in almoſt breathleſs agitation) are you ſure this picture was drawn for Lord P.ilippe?"

"Sure! (repeated the houſekeeper) Lord, yes, that I am indeed. Why I ſaw him, myſelf ſitting for it.'

"Good heaven! (ſaid Madeline to herſelf) what a likeneſs! Ah! how vain, (ſhe continued) my reſolves to forget de Sevignie while his image will be thus almoſt continually before me."

As if rivetted by ſome ſpell to the ſpot, ſhe ſtill continued to ſtand before it: the more ſhe gazed upon it, the more if poſſible the likeneſs grew upon her.

"Do you think it a handſome picture?" aſked the houſekeeper, elevating the light as ſhe ſpoke as if to give Madeline a better opportunity of examining it.

"Handſome! (repeated Madeline emphatically and with a deep ſigh) yes, very handſome indeed."

"Aye

"Aye, and ſo do I; (cried the houſe-keeper), what a ſweet ſmile there is about the mouth!"

Yes, (thought Madeline) the faſcinating ſmile of de Sevignie.

"And the eyes! (continued the houſe-keeper) how piercing, yet how mild!"

Madeline, who had turned to the houſe-keeper, again faſtened her's upon them, and again fancied ſhe beheld the dark eyes of de Sevignie beaming with unutterable tenderneſs upon her.

She ſighed more deeply than before; and fearful that if ſhe remained much longer in her preſent ſituation, ſhe ſhould not be able to conceal the feelings which now almoſt ſwelled her heart to burſting, ſhe inſtantly left the dreſſing-room.

"Your La'ſhip looks diſturbed, (ſaid the houſekeeper); I am afraid the picture of Lord Philippe has affected you, by bringing his melancholy fate to your mind: Poor youth,

it

it was a ſad thing indeed; but your La'ſhip muſt conſider, that if he had not been taken off, your father would never have been reſtored to his rights; and heaven knows, he was kept long enough out of them."

"I muſt for ever regret (ſaid Madeline) that his reſtoration to them was occaſioned by the death of his brother."

"Why to be ſure, (replied the houſekeeper) it would have been better if they could have been regained by any other means; but that that would ever have been the caſe there was very little probability of; and, between ourſelves, (proceeded ſhe, lowering her voice) ſince your La'ſhip has hinted at the affair to me, I think even if it was openly proved, inſtead of being merely ſuſpected, as it is at preſent, that the Count, your father, when his injuries were conſidered, would not be condemned; I, for my part, am one of thoſe who would forgive him for what he did."

"For what he did! (repeated Madeline, ſtarting), why what has he done to require forgiveneſs?

forgiveneſs? What is the affair you ſay I have hinted at? Speak,—you have agitated my very ſoul."

The houſekeeper receded a few ſteps in evident terror.

"Why, nothing, I aſſure your La'ſhip, (exclaimed ſhe in faltering accents) I only meant that—that—"

Here ſhe pauſed in the utmoſt confuſion.

"Speak! (cried Madeline, in a voice that betrayed the moſt dreadful agitation—an agitation cauſed by recollecting at that inſtant the converſation which had paſſed between her and the houſekeeper relative to the murder of Lord Philippe on the night ſhe had ſought for ſhelter in the caſtle); ſpeak, I adjure you, (ſhe repeated, with a diſtracted air) and relieve me from the horrors you have inſpired."

"I am very ſorry, I am ſure, (ſaid Mrs. Beatrice) that I have ſo diſtreſſed your La'ſhip; like

like an old woman, I muſt always be prating; I only meant, my Lady, I can aſſure you, to ſay, that if it was known that the Count, your father, rejoiced at, inſtead of regretted, the death of his brother, no one could wonder at it, conſidering the reaſon he had to hate him as the uſurper of his rights."

"And was this all you really meant?" aſked Madeline.

"Oh, all, I do aſſure your La'ſhip, upon the word of a true Chriſtian; if you do not believe me, I will call all the Saints in Heaven to witneſs for me."

Madeline could not help ſmiling:

"As it is a call, perhaps, (ſaid ſhe) they might not obey; I will take your word."

She now endeavoured to compoſe herſelf; but not eaſily could ſhe regain compoſure, nor diſmiſs remorſe from her mind, for having yielded, though but for a minute, to the horrid

horrid ſuggeſtions which had lately pervaded it.

"Oh! was my father acquainted with them, (cried ſhe to herſelf), never, never would he forgive me. Ah! how can I forgive myſelf?—Ah! how ſupport, without betraying it, the pain I muſt ever feel, for having thought unjuſtly of him."

"You ſeem well acquainted with the affairs of this family?" ſaid ſhe, ſitting down, and making an effort to appear compoſed.

"Yes, very well acquainted with them indeed, (replied the houſekeeper, ſignificantly ſhaking her head); I have lived in it almoſt ever ſince I was born; for my parents dying when I was very young, my aunt, who was houſekeeper, took me immediately under her protection."

It now occurred to Madeline, that the domeſtic who had liberated her unhappy grandmother might ſtill be living; and anxious, if ſhe was, to pay her the tribute of reſpect

reſpect ſhe merited, ſhe inquired; and heard, with pleaſure, that her preſent attendant was the perſon who had performed that generous act.

"Yes, my lady, it was I, (cried the houſekeeper, bridling up), who freed the poor unfortunate lady: I was then a fine lively young girl, as your La'ſhip indeed may well ſuppoſe, from the number of years which have paſſed ſince that event; and the moſt tender-hearted creature, though I ſay it myſelf, that perhaps ever lived. Dear me, I ſhall never forget how I cried, when I went with ſome food to her, and found her ſitting on the ground, ſo pale, yet ſo beautiful, with her hair, the fineſt hair I ever ſaw, about one ſhade darker than your's, my lady, hanging about her ſhoulders, and her little baby lying on her lap, on whom her tears were falling ſo faſt, while a cold wind whiſtled through the broken windows; for ſhe was confined in an upper room, in one of the uninhabited towers."

"Could

"Could I ſee that room?" aſked Madeline.

"Why, the ſtairs which lead to it are now very bad; but if you wiſh very much to go to it, I think you may venture ſome day or other. Poor ſoul!—it has not been opened I believe ſince ſhe left it. I never ſhall forget the manner in which ſhe thanked me as I led her from it; or the tears ſhe ſhed as ſhe put this little ring upon my finger."

Madeline ſtarted up and examined the ring; then, after a moment faſtening her fine eyes ſwimming in tears upon the houſekeeper,

"Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed, (ſhe exclaimed) be the hand which aided the unhappy!"

"There was ſuch a fuſs, (reſumed Mrs. Beatrice), when it was known that ſhe had eſcaped, I was very near being diſmiſſed from the caſtle; nothing but my youth could have obtained my forgiveneſs: ſo in it I continued

tinued, and on the death of my aunt obtained her place."

"And what was the general opinion about the unhappy Marchioneſs?" demanded Madeline.

"It was the opinion of the domeſtics, and ſuch ſimple folks, (replied the houſekeeper) that ſhe was an unfortunate lady, who had been cruelly injured; but all the great people believed, or ſaid they did at leaſt, that ſhe was an artful creature, who had drawn in the Count to have an amour with her."

After converſing a few minutes longer with the houſekeeper, Madeline told her, ſhe no longer required her attendance. The night was now indeed waning faſt, and moſt of the inhabitants of the caſtle had retired to repoſe, ere ſhe diſmiſſed her; however ſo much was her imagination affected by the gloom of her apartment, that ſhe could not avoid aſking, whether there was an inhabited one near it?

"Not

"Not very near it, (anſwered the houſe-keeper); the one adjoining it, (ſhe ſaid), had belonged to Lord Philippe, but ſince his death had been ſhut up, with all the reſt of the chambers in that gallery, except a few near the ſtaircaſe, one of which had been now prepared for the Count St. Julian."

Left to herſelf, inſtead of retiring to reſt, Madeline reſeated herſelf by the toilette, and leaning her head penſively upon her hand, began to ruminate over paſt events. The picture of Lord Philippe, by recalling de Sevignie to her mind, had awakened a thouſand tender recollections, which wrung her heart with agony; the idea of de Sevignie's falſehood had failed to conquer her tenderneſs; ſhe ſtill loved him, ſtill doubted his duplicity, and felt more convinced than ever that all the ſplendour of her preſent ſituation could never reſtore the cheerfulneſs her diſappointment relative to him had injured: again ſhe regretted that ſituation, again re-

gretted her elevation to a height which would render more conſpicuous the melancholy ſhe wiſhed to conceal from every eye.

"The ſadneſs that marks my brow will make me appear ungrateful to heaven, (cried ſhe) for the wonderful change it has effected in my father's favour; and what ill-natured ſpeculations may not be excited by ſeeing one ſo young ſo hopeleſs!"

Severely, however, did her heart reproach her for regretting that change—a change which removed from the memory of her grandmother the obloquy that had been ſo long attached to it.

From the ſufferings of her grandmother her thoughts naturally reverted to thoſe of her father, and the more ſhe reflected on his narrative, the more firmly convinced ſhe was that much of his life remained untold;—the recollected words of her departed friend confirmed this opinion.

"She

"She told me, (cried Madeline) and her lips knew not falſehood, that the calamities of his life were unprecedented; that its characters were marked by horror, and ſtained with blood;—but in the view he gave me of it, no ſuch calamities, no ſuch characters met my eye; tis therefore too evident, that much of it remained concealed.—Oh! may that concealment now continue, (ſhe proceeded); Oh! may no hand more daring than mine withdraw the veil I have been ſo often cautioned againſt raiſing; may no untoward circumſtance reveal a myſtery, whoſe elucidation I have now a preſentiment would fill me with horror!"

She ſuddenly pauſed, for at this inſtant ſhe thought ſhe heard a groan from the adjoining chamber; which, it may be remembered, has already been mentioned as once belonging to Lord Philippe.

Her heart beat quick, and ſhe turned her eyes towards the partition, as if they could

have penetrated it, and diſcovered the cauſe of the ſound that had alarmed her; but all again was profoundly ſtill, and ſhe at laſt began to think it was either the wind growling through the caſements, ſhe had heard, or ſome of thoſe unaccountable noiſes, ſo common in old houſes; ſuch, ſhe recollected, as had often ſtartled her at the chateau of the Counteſs de Merville.

Thus trying to tranquillize her mind, ſhe was beginning to undreſs, when the powers of motion were ſuddenly ſuſpended by a repetition of the ſound which had ſo recently alarmed her—a ſound ſhe could no longer aſcribe to the cauſes ſhe had already done.

Deep and dreadful groans now pierced her ear—groans which ſeemed burſting from the boſom of miſery and deſpair, and which by degrees roſe to a yell, intermingled with ſighs and ſobs.

That

That Madeline was not an entire ſtranger to ſuperſtition, muſt have been already perceived; that it was now awakened in her breaſt, cannot be denied, nor indeed ſcarcely wondered at, when her ſituation is conſidered; in a gloomy chamber, remote from every inhabited one, and aſſailed by noiſes from the long unoccupied apartment of a murdered relative.

For ſome minutes ſhe was unable to move: at length her eyes timidly glanced round her chamber, dreading yet wiſhing to aſcertain whether any terrific object was within it. They encountered a bell near the head of the bed, and which the houſekeeper had previouſly informed her communicated with the gallery where the ſervants ſlept; to this ſhe inſtantly darted, and rung it with violence;—almoſt immediately ſhe heard a buſtle over her head, and then deſcending ſteps.

She flew to the light, and taking it up, directly opened the door. Several of the

male and female domeſtics approached, accompanied by her father.

"What is the matter, my love? (cried he), I have been called from my bed by the ſound of paſſing ſteps."

"Liſten!" exclaimed Madeline, with a countenance of horror, and glancing at the chamber.

The yell became, if poſſible, more ſavage; and the domeſtics began to croſs themſelves. Madeline looked at her father, with an intention of aſking his opinion of the noiſe; but was prevented by obſerving the diſorder and death-like paleneſs of his countenance.

"How long (demanded he) is it ſince this chamber was opened?"

"Two months at leaſt, my Lord, (replied the houſekeeper), and then it was only opened for a few hours, of a fine ſunny day, merely to air it."

"Where is the key?" aſked he.

"It

"It hangs beſide the door, my Lord;" anſwered Mrs. Beatrice.

"I will examine it then," cried he.

"Examine it! (repeated the houſekeeper) Jeſu Maria!—Why, ſurely my Lord, you could not think of ſuch a thing; ſurely, ſurely you, of all men in the world, could not have courage to enter it?"

St. Julian ſtarted, and turned quick upon her; and a frown, ſuch as Madeline had never before ſeen upon it, darkened his brow—his eyes, his piercing eyes, were faſtened on her, as if wiſhing to diſcover the innermoſt receſſes of her ſoul, and in an agitated voice he demanded what ſhe meant.

"Meant, my Lord? (ſaid the affrighted Beatrice) meant — why, nothing — nothing that could give your Lordſhip offence."

St. Julian looked doubtfully at her; then turning, he took down the key, and unlocked the chamber; the moment he opened the

door, the women retreated from it, and ſhame alone, it was viſible, prevented the men from following their example:—attended by them and Madeline he entered it, and the noiſe directly ceaſed.

The room, like Madeline's, was hung with tapeſtry; this was now raiſed, and the walls minutely examined, but no opening could be diſcovered, nor any means of entrance but by the door in the gallery.

"Were you ever before diſturbed by any noiſe in this chamber?" aſked St. Julian.

"No, (the ſervants replied) never before the preſent night."

"'Tis ſtrange!" cried he, after pauſing for a minute.

They then quitted the chamber, which he relocked.

"I ſhall keep the key myſelf, (ſaid he, as he turned from it); it muſt undergo another

ther examination; though deſtruction, certain deſtruction ſhould overwhelm me for doing ſo, I will try to develope the myſtery."

He now took the hand of Madeline, and led her to her room; he tried to tranquillize her, but the trembling of his frame, and diſorder of his looks, mocked the efforts he made to do ſo.

"You look alarmed, my love?" cried he.

Madeline ſighed, and might have ſaid,

"And truſt me, in mine eye, ſo do you."

"You have no reaſon for terror, (ſaid he with a deep ſigh), your conduct has made no enemies either in this world or the next."

"I truſt not; (cried Madeline), but conſcious innocence is not always able to guard the heart againſt the attacks of fear; and I own I am ſhocked beyond expreſſion by the noiſe I have heard."

"I fear you are ſuperſtitious," exclaimed her father.

"Could

"Could you wonder if I was? (cried ſhe); What we cannot account for, we can ſcarcely help aſcribing to ſupernatural cauſes."

"Am I to infer, (ſaid St. Julian, regarding her with earneſtneſs) from what you ſay, that it is your opinion the groans proceeded from the ſpirit of the murdered Philippe?"

"With the Supreme nothing is impoſſible, (ſaid Madeline), and I have been told that the ſpirits of the injured are ſometimes permitted to reviſit this world, for the purpoſe of obtaining retribution; and if 'tis true what the houſekeeper once hinted to me, ——"

St. Julian ſtarted,—"What did ſhe hint?" aſked he with eagerneſs.

Madeline pauſed for a minute; then with a faltering voice, and timidly raiſing her eyes to her father's face,

"She told me (ſaid ſhe) that Lord Philippe fell not by the hands of banditti, but—"

"By whom?" demanded St. Julian, in almoſt convulſive agitation.

"Some

"Some relative," replied Madeline.

"And did ſhe acquaint you with the name of that relative?"

"No, and perhaps, after all, it was only an idle ſurmiſe of her own."

St. Julian left his ſeat, and traverſed the apartment.

Madeline viewed him with conſternation; her thoughts began to grow wild; and fears of the moſt frightful nature again aſſailed her heart.

"Oh, God! (ſhe cried to herſelf, while every nerve was ſtrained with agony at the idea) ſhould the ſuſpicions that now rack my breaſt be juſt!— This torture of ſuſpenſe is more than I can bear, (continued ſhe); I will throw myſelf at the feet of my father, I will diſcloſe to him my ſuſpicions: if falſe, he will pardon them, when he reflects on the combination of circumſtances which exited them;

them; if true, he will not ſurely ſhrink from repoſing confidence in his child.'

She roſe, but almoſt inſtantly ſunk upon her ſeat, recoiling from the dreadful idea of a child declaring to a parent her ſuſpicion of his having committed one of the moſt horrible crimes which human nature can be capable of:—ſhe ſhuddered, ſhe wondered at her temerity, in having ever thought of doing ſo; and, as ſhe wondered, the recollection of her father's precepts, his gentleneſs, his uniform piety, returning, ſhe again began to believe, that in thinking he had ever deviated from integrity, ſhe had done him the greateſt injuſtice.

St. Julian, whoſe emotions prevented his noticing thoſe of Madeline, ſoon reſumed his ſeat; his countenance had loſt its wildneſs, and a faint glow again mantled his cheek.

"I truſt, my love, (cried he) you will not again liſten to the idle ſurmiſes of the ſervants:

vants: even on the ſlighteſt foundation they are apt to raiſe improbabilities and horrors, which, in ſpite of reaſon, make too often a dangerous impreſſion on the mind, and overturn its quiet, by engendering ſuperſtition: — Heaven knows, (he proceeded) the evils of life are ſufficiently great without adding to them thoſe of the imagination."

Madeline aſſured him ſhe would never more encourage any converſation from the domeſtics, on family affairs.

"You look fatigued, (ſaid he) and I will now (riſing as he ſpoke) leave you to repoſe; retire to it, my love, without fear or trembling; bleſt with conſcious innocence, you can dread no evil, no angry ſpirit demanding retribution:—Oh! never may your boſom loſe that peace which muſt ever belong to virtue!—Oh! never may reflection break your ſlumbers, or an offended conſcience preſent terrific images to your view. Farewel, my child, (tenderly embracing her)

would

would to God thy father could ſink to forgetfulneſs with a mind like thine!"

Heart-ſtruck by the laſt words of her father, Madeline remained many minutes rivetted to the ſpot on which he had left her, deeply ruminating on them; then ſtarting, as if from a deep reverie,

"I muſt not think, (ſaid ſhe) ſince thought is ſo dreadful."

She felt fatigued, but it was more a mental than a bodily fatigue—that fatigue which repels, inſtead of inviting reſt; beſides a ſecret dread clung to her ſoul, which rendered her unwilling to go to bed; ſhe therefore threw herſelf before a large crucifix, that was placed near it, and continued to pray for her father, for herſelf, and for repoſe to the ſpirit of the murdered Philippe, till day began to dawn through the ſhutters. With night her terror decreaſed, and undreſſing herſelf, ſhe then retired to bed; but the ſleep into which ſhe ſoon fell was broken by horrid viſions, and

ſhe

ſhe aroſe in the morning, pale, and unrefreſhed.

The ſun beamed bright through the caſements, and on the ſtately trees that waved before them, unnumbered birds poured forth their matin lay, intermingled with the ſimple carol of the woodman: but neither the bright beams of the ſun, the melodious notes of ſoaring birds, nor the wild ſong of the peaſant, could now, as heretofore, delight the mind of Madeline. Saddened beyond expreſſion by obtruſive ideas, ſhe ſtrove to baniſh that ſadneſs by baniſhing thought—but, ah! how vain the effort! the "vital ſpark of heavenly flame" within us muſt be extinguiſhed, ere we can ceaſe to think.

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